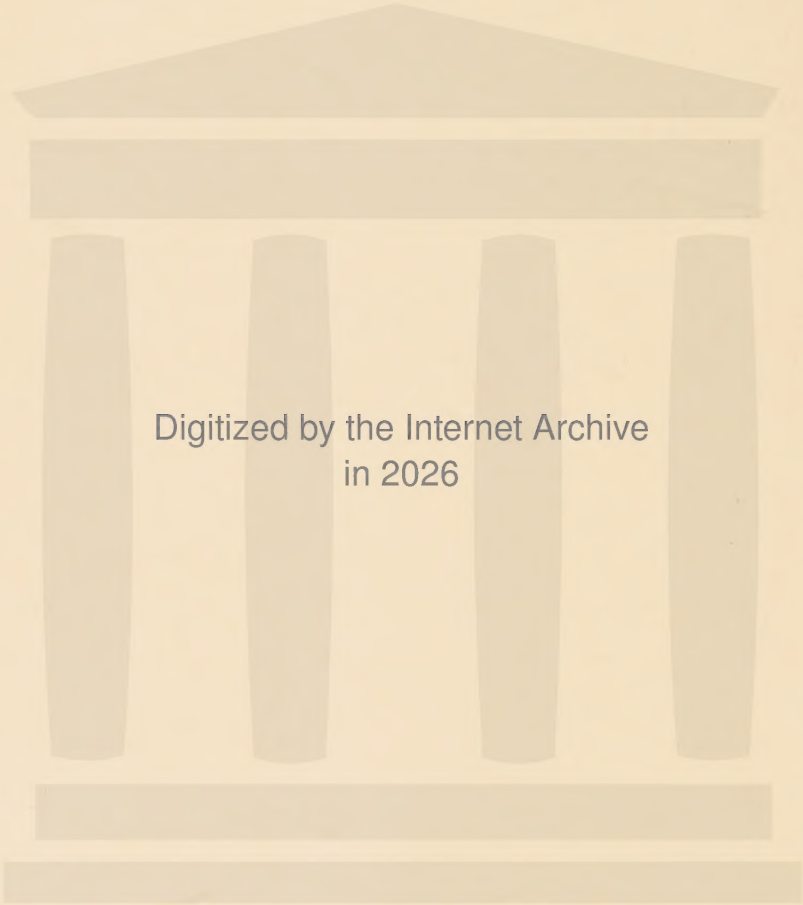
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ENGLISH LITERATURE

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD

BY

RICHARD GARNETT, C.B., LL.D.

AND

EDMUND GOSSE, M.A., LL.D.

VOL. III

John Milton.

AFTER THE ORIGINAL CRAYON DRAWING FROM LIFE BY WILLIAM FAITHORNE,
AT BAYFORDBURY, HERTS.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME III

FROM MILTON TO JOHNSON

BY

EDMUND GOSSE

HON. M.A. OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
HON. LL.D. OF ST. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

SAMUEL JOHNSON
FROM THE BUST BY J. NOLLEKENS

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD VOLUME

With the second quarter of the seventeenth century we reach a period when literature in England becomes active and impassioned in so great a variety of forms that it is no longer possible in a summary record to mention all the names which naturally attract the historian. He is forced to close his ears to many siren voices. His task becomes more and more one of selection, and the most serious of his responsibilities a weighing the sum of qualities which each candidate presents. In this he cannot hope or even wish to please everybody; he must follow as consistently as he can a principle adopted in harmony with his own temperament and his own line of study. He can, however, affirm that if the work of certain authors is not recorded in the following pages, it is not that their merit has been neglected, but that the exigencies of space have been tyrannical.

The writer of this volume has to thank two friends in particular for invaluable help in its construction. Mr. A. H. Bullen, whose acquaintance with the poetical history of the seventeenth century is unsurpassed, has obliged him by reading the whole of the proofs and by making numerous suggestions. Mr. Austin Dobson has shown a similar kindness by examining the portions of the volume dealing with the eighteenth century, and by indicating the very latest biographical discoveries. The wide and intimate knowledge of the iconography of English literature possessed both by Mr. Bullen and by Mr. Austin Dobson has also been placed, with the most generous good nature, at the author's disposal, greatly, he believes, to his readers' advantage.

Among those who have obliged the author with illustrative matter, of the highest interest, which had never been reproduced before, must be mentioned, with particularly warm acknowledgment, the present Lord Leconfield, Sir Charles Tennant and Mr. Clinton Baker, of Bayfordbury.

EDMUND GOSSE.

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ENGLISH LITERATURE

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD

CHAPTER I

THE DECLINE

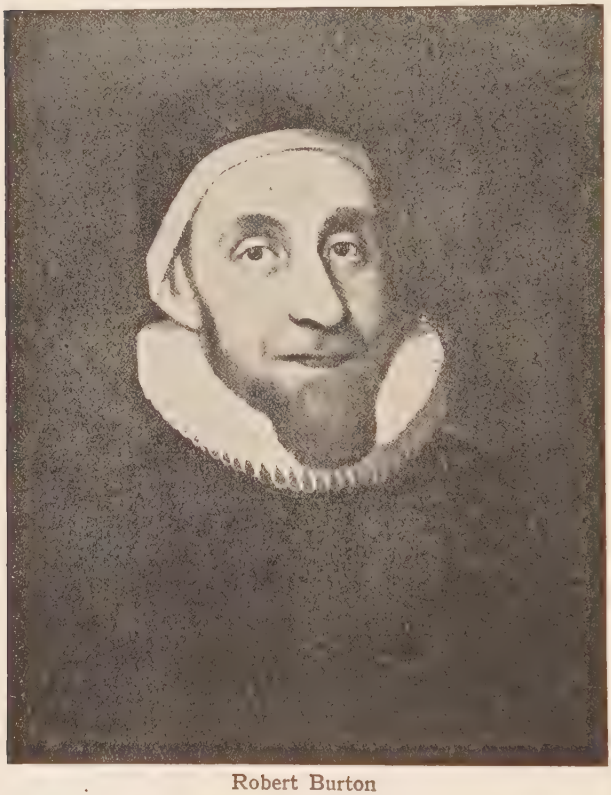
1630–1660

THE decline of letters in England began almost as soon as Shakespeare was in his grave, and by the death of James I. had become obvious. The period which we have now to consider was illuminated by several names of very high genius both in prose and verse, and by isolated works of extraordinary value and beauty. In spite, however, of the lustre which these give to it, no progress was made for thirty years in the general structure of literature; at best, things remained where they were, and, in literary history, to stop still is to go back. It is possible that we should have a different tale to tell if the most brilliant Englishman who survived Shakespeare had realised what it was possible to do with the tongue of his country. At the close of James's reign Francis Bacon stood, as Ben Jonson put it, "the mark and acme of our language," but he gave its proficients little encouragement. He failed, for all his intuition, to recognise the turn of the tide; he thought that books written in English would never be citizens of the world. Anxious to address Europe, the universe, he felt no interest in his English contemporaries, and passed through the sublime age of Elizabethan poetry without conceding the fact of its existence.

Burton

When Bacon died, in 1626, he left English literature painfully impoverished. For the next fifteen years it may be said that prose of the higher kind scarcely existed, and that there threatened to be something like a return to barbarism. But a work which belongs to a slightly earlier period must first of all be discussed. No book is more characteristic of the coming age, of its merits alike and of its faults, than that extraordinary emporium, the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, first issued in 1621. ROBERT BURTON, a clergyman, mainly resident at Christchurch, Oxford, was the author of this vast monograph on what we should now call neurasthenia. The text of Burton has been unkindly styled a collection of clause-heaps, and he is a typical example of that extreme sinuosity, one of the detestable tricks of the schools, to which the study of the ancients betrayed our early seventeenth-century prose-writers. Of the width of reading of such men as Bacon and Burton and Hales there have been no later specimens, and these writers, but Burton above all others, burden their folio pages with a

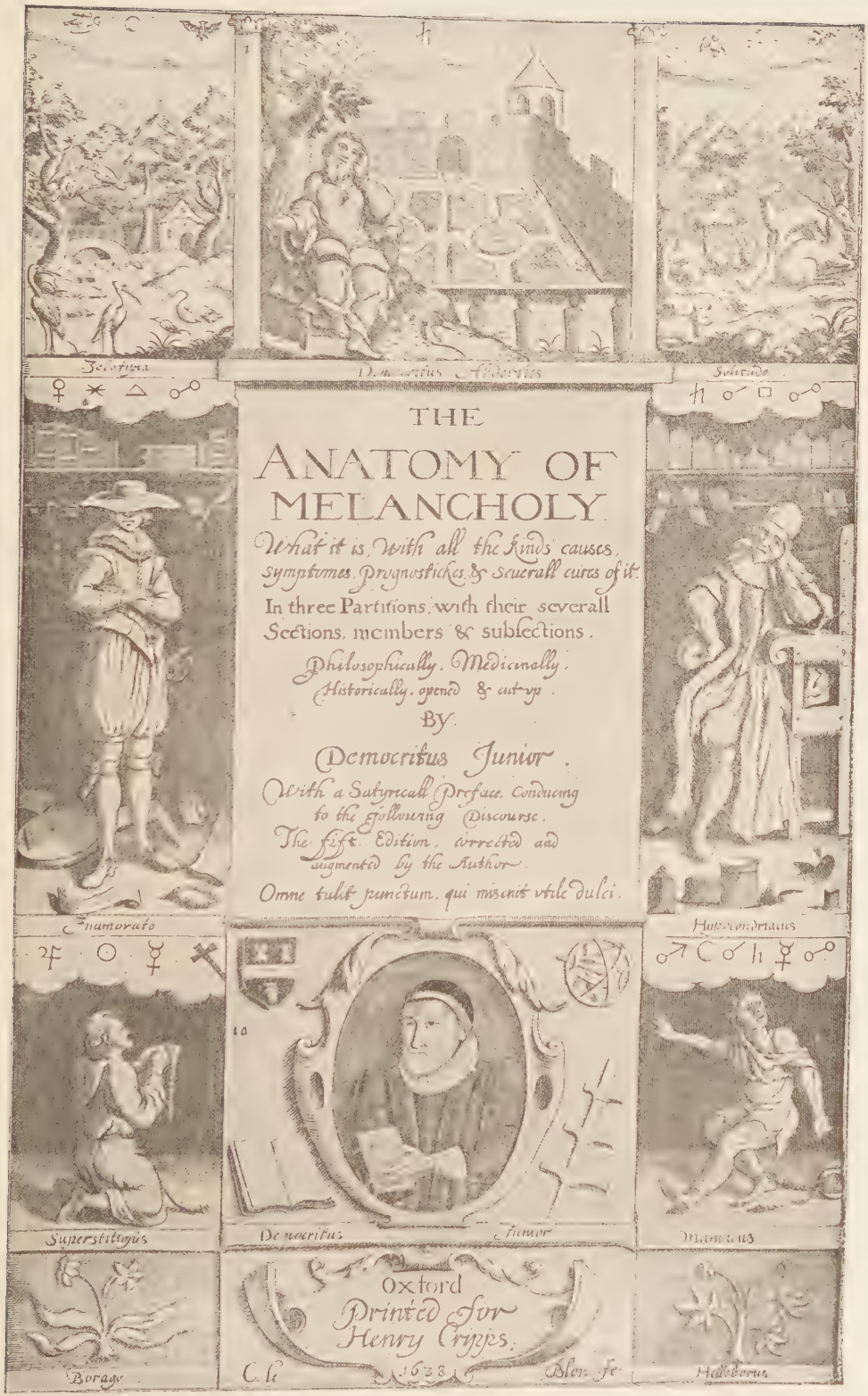
gorgeous spoil of "proofs" and "illustrations" from the Greek and Latin authors. The *Anatomy of Melancholy*, though started as a plain medical dissertation, grew to be, practically, a huge cento of excerpts from all the known (and unknown) authors of Athens and Rome. All Burton's treasure was in Minerva's Tower, and the chamber that he fitted up there has been the favourite haunt of scholars in every generation. In his own his one book enjoyed a prodigious success, for it exactly suited and richly indulged the temper of the time. But Burton, delightful as he is, added nothing to the evolution of English prose in this its dangerous hour of crisis. The vogue of his entertaining neurotic compendium really tended to retard the purification of the language.



Robert Burton

After the Portrait at Brasenose College, Oxford
(*From Messrs. Geo. Bell & Sons' edition of the "Anatomy of Melancholy"*)

Robert Burton (1577–1640) was born at Lindley, in Leicestershire, on the 8th of February 1577. His father was a country gentleman, Ralph Burton. He was educated at Nuneaton and at Sutton Coldfield schools, and in 1593 he was entered as a commoner of Brasenose College, Oxford, whence, in 1599, he passed to Christ Church as a student. He took orders in 1614, scarcely any record of his earlier career at the University having been preserved, but in 1616 we find him presented to the vicarage of St. Thomas's, Oxford. This, and the rectory of Segrave which Lord Berkeley gave him in 1630, he kept "with much ado to his dying day." The famous *Anatomy of Melancholy* first appeared in 1621, and was written by Burton in his rooms in college. Burton suffered from the hypochondria he described; we are told that "he would fall into such a state of despondency that he could only get relief by going to the bridge-foot at Oxford, and hearing the bargemen swear at one another." He was evidently looked upon as a very original character at Oxford, and his "merry, facete, and juvenile" conversation was much sought after. Burton died in his college rooms, not without suspicion of suicide, on the 25th of January 1640, and was buried in Christ Church Cathedral. A Latin comedy of *Philosophaster*, written by Burton in 1606, remained in MS. until 1862.


Democritus
Solitude
THE
ANATOMY OF
MELANCHOLY.
What it is, With all the Kinds causes, symptomes, Prognostickes, & Severall cures of it.
In three Partitions, with their severall Sections, members & subsections.
Philosophically, Medicinally, Historically, opened & cut vp.
By
Democritus Junior.
With a Satyricall Preface, conducing to the following Discourse.
The fift Edition, corrected and augmented by the Author.
Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.
Enamorato
Hypocondriacus
Superstitiosus
Democritus Junior
Melancholicus
Oxford
Printed for
Henry Cripps.
1638
Borage
Hellebor.

From the "Anatomy of Melancholy"

Voluntary solitariness is that which is familiar with melancholy, and gently brings on, like a Siren, a shooing-horn, or some Sphinx, to this irrevocable gulf; a primary cause, Piso calls it; most pleasant it is at first to such as are melancholy given, to lie in bed whole days, and keep their chambers, to walk alone in some solitary grove, betwixt wood and water, by a brook side, to meditate upon some delightsome and pleasant subject, which shall affect them most; *amabilis insania*, and *mentis gratissimus error*. A most incomparable delight it is so to melancholize and build castles in the air, to go smiling to themselves, acting an infinite variety of parts, which they suppose and strongly imagine they represent, or that they see acted or done. . . . So delightsome are these toys at first, they could spend whole days and nights without sleep, even whole years alone in such contemplations and fantastical meditations, which are like unto dreams; and they will hardly be drawn from them, or willingly interrupt. So pleasant their vain conceits are, that they hinder their ordinary tasks and necessary business; they cannot address themselves to them, or almost to any study or employment: these fantastical and bewitching thoughts so covertly, so feelingly, so urgently, so continually, set upon, creep in, insinuate, possess, overcome, distract and detail them, they cannot, I say, go about their more necessary business, stave off or extricate themselves, but are ever musing, melancholizing and carried along, as he (they say) that is led round about an heath with a Puck in the night.

Chillingworth Probably the strongest prose work produced in England during the dead time of which we are speaking is William Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants* (1637). This divine was somewhat slighted in his own age, as giving little show of learning in his discourses; but the perspicuity of his style and the force of his reasoning commended him to the Anglican divines of the Restoration. It is characteristic that Tillotson had a great admiration for this humane latitudinarian, and that Locke wrote, "If you would have your son reason well, let him read Chillingworth."

William Chillingworth (1602–1644) was a son of a mayor of Oxford of the same name; he was born in that city in October 1602. In 1618 he became a scholar of Trinity College, took his degree in 1620, and in 1628 was elected fellow of his college. The famous Jesuit, John Fisher (whose real name was John Percy), was now very active in Oxford, and Chillingworth became one of his converts. He retired to Douai, but Laud, who took a great interest in him, kept up a correspondence with him, and persuaded him in 1631 to leave the Jesuits and return to Oxford. He was still a Catholic, but about the year 1634 his scruples were removed and he finally declared for Protestantism. Chillingworth was taunted with inconsistency of temper and judgment, and he began his *Religion of Protestants a safe way to Salvation* as an apologia; it appeared in 1637. Before this, he had been urged to take orders in the Church of England, but his conscience had been too sensitive. In 1638, however, these difficulties also were removed, and Chillingworth became Chancellor to the diocese of Salisbury, with the prebend of Brixworth attached. He was a zealous Royalist, and took part, more as a military engineer than as a chaplain, in the siege of Gloucester. He was taken prisoner at the surrender of Arundel Castle in December 1643. He was already ill, and was permitted, when the rest of the prisoners were marched to London, to be carried to the Bishop's palace in Chichester, where he died on the 30th of January 1644. He was originally denied

Christian burial by the Presbyterian garrison, who, however, eventually allowed his body to be placed in Chichester Cathedral. At his burial there was an unseemly protestation, and at the close of a wild diatribe, a fanatic flung into the grave a copy of Chillingworth's book "to rot," he said, "with its author, and see corruption." Chillingworth's sermons were collected in 1664.

William Chillingworth

After Kyte's Engraving

FROM THE "RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS"

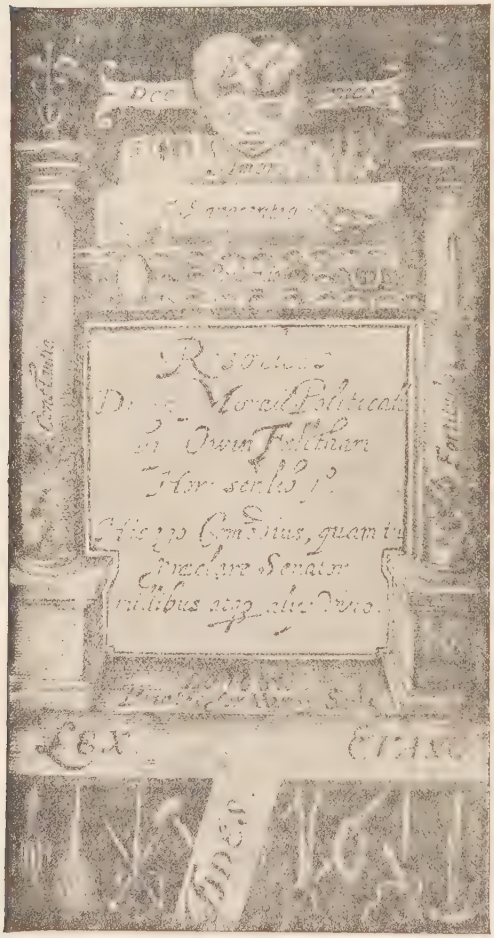
As nothing by water can be made more cold than water, nor by fire more hot than fire, nor by honey more sweet than honey, nor by gall more bitter than gall; or if you will suppose it infused without means, then that power which infuseth into the understanding assent, which bear analogy to sight in the eye, must also infuse evidence, that is, visibility into the object: and look what degree of assent is infused into the understanding, at least the same degree of evidence must be infused into the object. And for you to require a strength of credit beyond the appearance of the object's credibility, is all one as if you should require me to go ten mile an hour upon a horse that will go but five; to discern a man certainly through a mist or cloud that makes him not certainly discernible; to hear a sound more clearly than it is audible; to understand a thing more fully than it is intelligible; and he that doth so, I may well expect that his next injunction will be that I must see something that is invisible, hear something inaudible, understand something that is wholly unintelligible.

Essays

The masterpiece of Chillingworth stands almost alone, in a sort of underwood of Theophrastian character-sketches. Among these must be named the popular *Microcosmography* (1628) of JOHN EARLE (1601–1668), and the *Resolves* of OWEN FELTHAM (1600?–1677?), which was published about the same time. These latter were technically essays. The fashion for these studies was greatly encouraged by the decay of the drama, and particularly by that of comedy. This decay is one of the most extraordinary features of the time, and requires particular attention. The brief and magnificent school of English drama, begun by Kyd and Marlowe scarcely

more than a generation before, having blazed and crackled like a forest fire fed with resinous branches, sank almost in a moment, and lingered only as a heap of white ash and glowing charcoal.

The Decline of the Drama

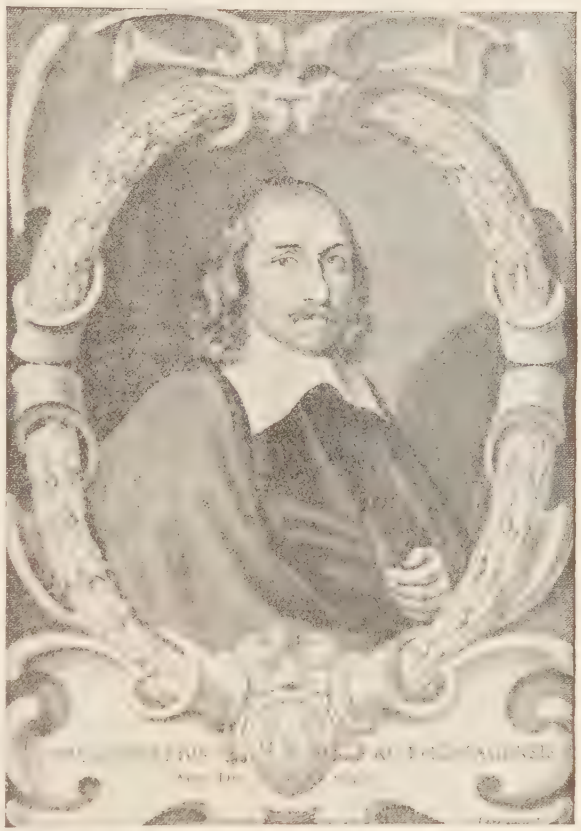


Title-page of Feltham's "Resolves"

The causes of the rapid decline of the drama have been sought in the religious and political disturbances of the country; but if we examine closely, we find that stage-poetry had begun to be reduced in merit before those disturbances had taken definite shape. It will probably be safer to recognise that the opening out of national interests took attention more and more away from what had always been an exotic entertainment, a pleasure mainly destined for the nobles and their retainers. There was a general growth of enthusiasm, of public feeling, throughout England, and this was not favourable to the cultivation of a species of entertainment such as the drama had been under Elizabeth, a cloistered art destined exclusively for pleasure, without a didactic or a moral aim. For many years there continued to persist an interest in the stage wide enough to fill the theatres, in spite of the growing suspicion of such amusements; but the audiences rapidly grew less select and less refined, less able to appreciate the good, and more tolerant of the rude and bad. In technique there was a falling off so abrupt as to be quite astonishing, and not easily to be accounted for. The "sons" of Ben Jonson, trained as they had been at his feet, sank into forms that were primitive in their rudeness. The curious reader may pursue the vanishing genius of poetic drama down through the writings of Randolph, of Jasper Mayne, of Brome, of Cartwright, till he finds himself a bewildered spectator of the last gibberings and contortions of the spectre in the inconceivable "tragedies" of Suckling. If the wits of the universities, highly trained, scholarly young men, sometimes brilliantly efficient in other branches of poetry, could do no better than this, what wonder that in ruder hands the very primitive notions with regard to dramatic construction

and propriety were forgotten. Before Shakespeare had been a quarter of a century in his grave, Shirley was the only person left writing in England who could give to fiction in dialogue the very semblance of a work of art.

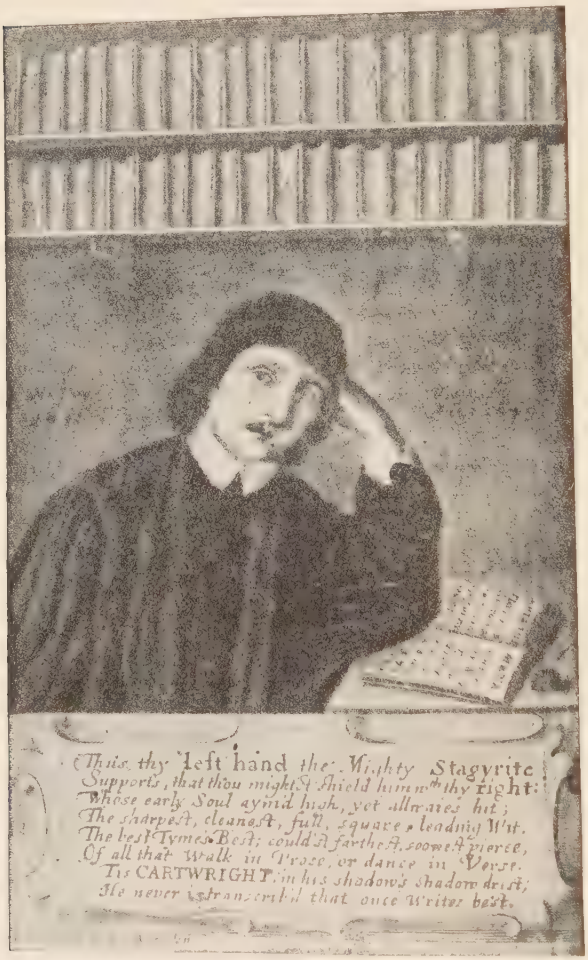
We must pause for a moment to observe a highly interesting phenomenon. At the very moment when English drama was crumbling to dust, the drama of France was springing into vigorous existence. The conjectured year of the performance of our last great play, the *Broken Heart*, of Ford, is that of the appearance of the earliest of Corneille's tragedies. So rapidly did events follow one another, that when that great man produced *Le Cid*, English drama was moribund; when his *Rodogune* was acted, it was dead; and the appearance of his *Agésilas* saw it re-arisen under Dryden in totally different forms, and as though from a different hemisphere. It is impossible not to reflect that if the dramatic instinct had been strong in Milton, the profoundest of all religious tragedies might happen to be not that *Polyeucte* which we English have enviously to admire in the literature of France, but a play in which the noblest ideas of Puritanism might have been posed against worldly philosophy and sensual error. Yet even for a Milton in 1643 the ground would not have been clear as it was for Corneille. The French poet had but to gather together and lift into splendid distinction elements whose main fault had been their imperfection. For him, French tragedy, long preparing to blossom, was reaching its spring at last; for us, our too brief summer was at an end, and, cloyed with fruit, the drama was hurrying through its inevitable autumn. If Ben Jonson, tired and old, had felt any curiosity in glancing across the Channel, he might have heard of the success of a goodly number of pieces by a poet destined, more exactly than any Englishman, to carry out



Pierre Corneille

Jonson's own ideal of a tragic poet. He had desired that a great tragedian should specially excel in "civil prudence and eloquence," and to whom can these qualities be attributed if not to Corneille? The incoherent and scarce intelligible English dramatists of the decline were as blankly ignorant of the one as of the other.

The laxity of versification which our poetic drama permitted itself had much to answer for in the degradation of style. Ben Jonson had been too stiff; Shakespeare, with a divine instinct, hung balanced across the point which divides hardness of versification from looseness; but in the soft hands of Fletcher, the borders were already overpast, his followers became looser and more sinuous still, and the comparative exactitude of Massinger and Shirley was compromised by their languor. The verse of Ford, it is true, is correct and elegant, with a slight rigidity that seems pre-Shakespearian. But among the names which follow these we find not one that understood what dramatic blank verse should be. If there be an exception, it is WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT, whose plays, although they smell too much of the lamp, and possess no aptitude for the theatre, pour a good deal of waxen beauty into moulds of stately metre. It was of this typical Oxford poet, who died, still very young, in 1643, that Ben Jonson said, "My son Cartwright writes all like a man."


Thus thy Left hand the Mighty Stagyrite
Supports, that thou might'st shield him with thy right:
Whose early Soul aym'd high, yet all-wayes hit;
The sharpest, cleanest, full, square, leading Wit.
The best Tymes Best; could'st farthest, soonest pierce,
Of all that Walk in Prose, or dance in Verse.
'Tis CARTWRIGHT, in his shadow's shadow drest;
He never transcribed that once Writes best.

William Cartwright
From the "Poems" of 1651

William Cartwright (1611–1643) was the son of an innkeeper at Cirencester, and was born in September 1611 near Tewkesbury. (According to another but less probable account he was born in August 1615.) He was educated at Westminster, and was in 1628 elected student of Christ Church College, Oxford. He took his degree in 1635, and entered the Church, becoming "the most florid and

seraphical preacher in the University." He was still at Oxford when the Civil War broke out, and suffered for his opinions. On the 29th of November 1643 he died of what was called "camp-disease." The king went into mourning on the occasion of Cartwright's funeral in Christ Church Cathedral, and, even in the midst of the national troubles, the young poet's death was looked upon as a public calamity. Of his four plays the best-known, *The Royal Slave*, was acted in Oxford in 1636, and printed in 1639. Cartwright's poems were first collected in 1651. The extravagant opinion of his genius which prevailed in the middle of the seventeenth century is scarcely justified by his writings, although his plays have merit. He was very handsome, ardent, and eloquent, and all Oxford seems to have been captivated by his extraordinary personal charm.

Reader lo heere thou mist two faces finde,
One of the body, t'other of the Minde;
This by the Graver so, that with much strife
Nee thinke Brome dead, hee's drawne so to the life
That by's owne pen's done so ingeniously
That who reads it must thinke hee ne'er shall dy
A B

Richard Brome

With Inscription by Alexander Brome

Of the life of **Richard Brome** very little is known. He was Ben Jonson's servant in his youth, and there was friendship between master and man until Jonson's death. The earliest known attempt which Brome made to produce a drama was in concert with Ben Jonson's son in 1623. Brome made no secret of his dependence on the greater poet, and he was accused of gathering up, in his own plays, Jonson's "sweepings." The most readable of his twenty plays are *The Sparagus Garden*, published in 1640; *The Antipodes*, 1640; and *A Jovial Crew*, 1641. At this time Brome's talent seems to have reached its highest point; he probably ceased to write plays when the theatres were closed in 1642. It is believed that Brome died in 1653.

Jasper Mayne (1604–1672), born at Hatherleigh in Devon, was educated at Westminster, and at Christ Church College, Oxford. He took holy orders in 1631, and in time became Canon of Christ Church and Archdeacon of Chichester. He

died in college on the 6th of December 1672, and is buried in the Cathedral. He wrote a striking play, *The City Match*, 1639. Jasper Mayne was celebrated for his facetious humour, of which some very vulgar specimens have been preserved, and he was a favourite of Charles II.

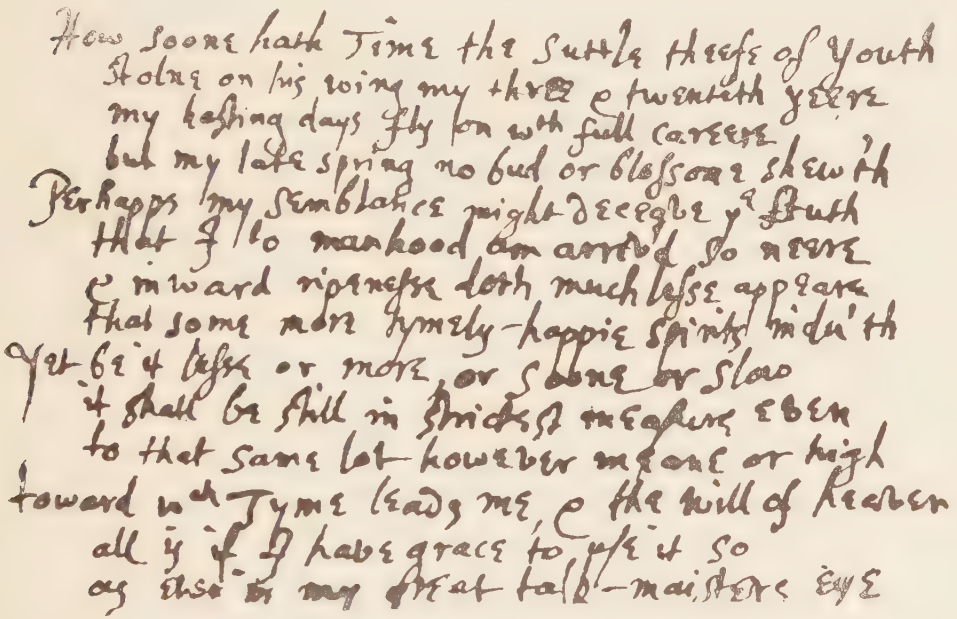
Milton

In one department of poetry, however, there is something else to chronicle than decline. The reign of Charles I., so unillustrious in most branches of literature, produced a very fine school of lyric poets. Among these JOHN MILTON was easily the greatest, and between the years 1631 and 1637 he contributed to English literature about two thousand of the most exquisite, the most perfect, the most consummately executed verses which are to be discovered in the language. This apparition of Milton at Horton, without associates, without external stimulus, Virtue seeing "to do what Virtue would, by his own radiant light," this is one of the most extraordinary phenomena which we encounter in our history. Milton was born in 1608, and proceeded to Cambridge in 1625, where he remained until 1632. During these seven years the eastern University was one of the main centres of poetical animation in the country; several true poets and a host of poetasters were receiving their education there. The poems of Dr. Donne, handed about in MS., were universally admired, and were the objects of incessant emulation.

Of all this environment, happily but surprisingly, not a trace is to be found on Milton. We find, indeed, the evidences of a loving study of Shakespeare and of the ancients, and in his earliest work a distinct following of those scholars of Spenser, Giles and Phineas Fletcher, who had been prominent figures at Cambridge just before Milton came into residence. What drew the young Milton to Giles Fletcher it is not difficult to divine. That writer's *Christ's Victory and Triumph* had been a really important religious poem, unequal in texture, but rising at its highest to something of that pure magnificence of imagination which was to be Milton's aim and glory. Phineas Fletcher had composed a Scriptural poem, the *Apollyonists*, which was published in 1627. This was a fragment on the fall of the rebel angels, and Milton must have been greatly struck with it, for he paid it the compliment of borrowing considerably from it when he came to write *Paradise Lost*. When, at the close of 1629, Milton began his *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, he was still closely imitating the form of these favourites of his, the Fletchers, until the fifth stanza was reached, and then he burst away in a magnificent measure of his own, pouring forth that hymn which carried elaborate lyrical writing higher than it had ever been taken before in England.

But, gorgeous as was the *Nativity Ode*, it could not satisfy the scrupulous

instinct of Milton. Here were fire, melody, colour; what, then, was lacking? Well, purity of style and that "Doric delicacy" of which Milton was to be the prototype—these were lacking. We read the *Nativity Ode* with rapture, but sometimes with a smile. Its language is occasionally turbid, incongruous, even absurd. We should be sorry that "the chill marble seems to sweat," and that "the sun in bed . . . pillows his chin



Milton's Sonnet on his Twenty-third Birthday

(*From the original MS. in Trinity College Library*)

How soone hath Time the suttle theefe of Youth
Stolne on his wing my three & twentith yeere
my hasting days fly on wth full careere
but my late spring no bud or blossome shew'th
Perhapps my semblance might deceave ye truth
that I to manhood am arriv'd so neere
& inward ripenesse doth much lesse appeare
that some more tymely-happie spirits indu'th
Yet be it lesse or more, or soone or slow
it shall be still in strictest measure even
to that same lot however meane or high
toward wch Tyme leads me, & the will of heaven
all is if I have grace to use it so
as ever in my great task-maisters eye

upon an orient wave," if these were not like the tricks of a dear and valued friend, oddities that seem part of his whole exquisite identity. Such excrescences as these we have to condone in almost all that we find delightful in seventeenth-century literature. We may easily slip into believing these conceits and flatnesses to be in themselves beautiful; but this is a complacency which is to be avoided, and we should rather dwell on such a stanza of the *Nativity Ode* as xix., in which not a word, not a syllable, mars the distinguished perfection of the poem, but in which every element combines to produce a solemn, harmonious, and imposing effect.

The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
  Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
  With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The evolution of Milton continued, though in 1630 we find him (in the *Passion*) returning to the mannerisms of the Fletchers. But, in the *Sonnet on his Twenty-third Birthday* he is adult at last, finally dedicated, as a priest, to the sacred tasks of the poetic life, and ready to abandon all "the earthly grossness" which dragged down the literature of his age. And next we hear him put the golden trumpet to his lips and blow the melodies of *At a Solemn Music*, in which no longer a trace of the "metaphysical" style mars the lucid perfection of utterance, but in which words arranged with consummate art summon before us a vision not less beatific than is depicted by Dante in his *Paradiso* or by Fra Angelico in his burning frescoes. Beyond these eight-and-twenty lines, no poet, and not Milton himself, has proceeded. Human language, at all events in English, has never surpassed, in ecstasy of spiritual elevation or in pure passion of melody, this little canzonet, which was, in all probability, the first-fruits of Milton's retirement to Horton.

At a Solemn Music.

Blest pair of sirens, pledges of heaven's joy,
Sphere-born, harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mix'd power employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high-rais'd phantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure concent,
Aye sung before the sapphire-colour'd throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright seraphim, in burning row,
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow;
And the cherubic host, in thousand quires,
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly:
That we on earth, with undiscording voice,
May rightly answer that melodious noise,
As once we did, till disproportion'd sin
Jarr'd against nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd

In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
Oh, may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with heaven, till God, ere long
To His celestial consort us unite,
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light!

In the sylvan Buckinghamshire village, "far from the noise of town, and shut up in deep retreats," Milton abandoned himself to study and reflection. He was weighed upon, even thus early, by a conviction of his sublime calling; he waited for the seraphim of the Eternal Spirit to touch his lips with the hallowed fire of inspiration, and he was neither idle nor restless, neither ambitious nor indifferent. He read with extreme eagerness, rising early and retiring late; he made himself master of all that could help him towards his mysterious vocation in Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and English. To mark the five years of his stay at Horton, he produced five immortal poems, *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus*, *Lycidas*, all essentially lyrical, though two of them assume the semi-dramatic form of the pageant or masque, a species of highly artificial poetry to which Ben Jonson and Campion had lent their prestige in the preceding age.

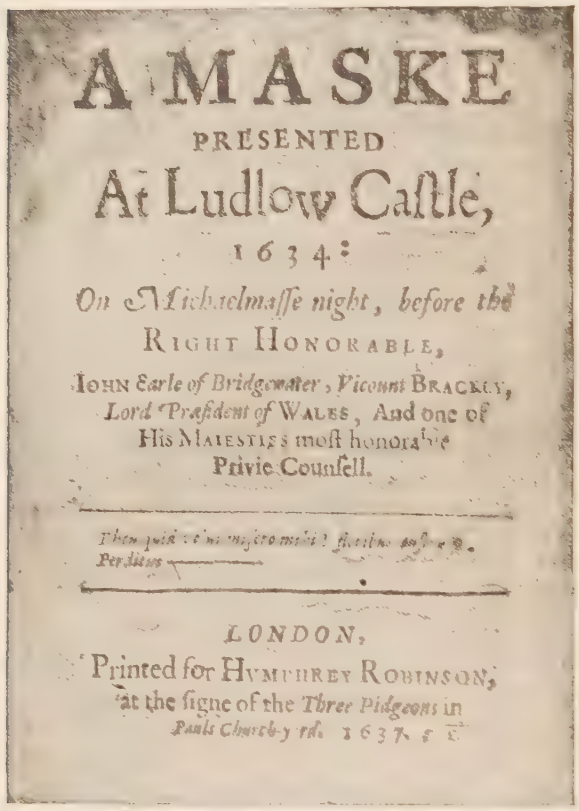
Frontispiece to Milton's Poems, 1645

"What Milton thought when this engraving of himself was shown him, we can only guess. But, instead of having it cancelled, he let it go forth with the volume,—only taking his revenge by a practical joke at the engraver's expense. He offered him some lines of Greek verse to be engraved ornamentally under the portrait; and these lines the poor artist did innocently engrave, little thinking what they meant. An English translation of them may run thus:—

That an unskilful hand had carved this print
You'd say at once, seeing the living face;
But, finding here no jot of me, my friends,
Laugh at the wretched artist's mis-attempt."

(From *The Works of John Milton.*
By David Masson, M.A., LL.D.)

The ineffable refinement and dignity of these poems found a modest publicity in 1645. But the early poetry of Milton captured little general favour, and one small edition of it sufficed for nearly thirty years. Few imitated or were influenced by Milton's lyrics, and until the eighteenth century was well advanced they were scarcely read. Then their celebrity began, and from Gray and Collins onward, every English poet of eminence has paid his tribute to *Il Penseroso* or to *Lycidas*. If we examine closely the diction of these Horton poems, we shall find that in almost all of them (in *Comus* least) a mannerism which belonged to the age faintly dims their purity of style. Certain little tricks we notice are Italianisms, and the vogue of the famous Marino, author of the *Adone*, who had died while Milton was at Cambridge, was responsible, perhaps, for something. But, on the whole, lyrical poetry in this country has not reached a higher point, in the reflective and impersonal order, than is reached in the central part of *L'Allegro* and in the Spirit's epilogue to *Comus*.


A MASKE
PRESENTED
At Ludlow Castle,
1634:
On Michaelmasse night, before the
RIGHT HONORABLE,
IOHN Earle of Bridgewater, Viscount BRACKLY,
Lord Præsident of WALES, And one of
His MAIESTIES most honorable
Privie Counsell.
Perditus
LONDON,
Printed for HVMFREY ROBINSON,
at the signe of the *Three Pidgeons* in
Paul's Church-yard. 1637.

Title-page of "Comus." First Edition

THE EPILOGUE TO "COMUS."

Spir. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky;
There I suck the liquid air,
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree:
Along the crispèd shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Thither all their bounties bring;

There eternal summer dwells,
And west-winds, with musky wing,
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells;
Iris there, with humid bow,
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew;
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true,)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen:
But far above in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her fam'd son, advanced,
Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranced,
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run,
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free:
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

John Milton (1608–1674) was born at the shop of The Spread Eagle, Bread Street, Cheapside, on the 9th of December 1608. His father was a musician, and by trade a wealthy scrivener. Milton was a day-pupil at St. Paul's School under Alexander Gill, esteemed the most skilful schoolmaster of the age, but he seems to have owed still more to Thomas Young, a private tutor in his father's house. He went up to Cambridge, where he was admitted a pensioner of Christ's College on the 12th of February 1625. At the University, Milton disagreed with the authorities, and was rusticated for a time; Aubrey heard that he was even flogged, but it is certain that he committed no moral fault. He was even known, for the uprightness of his behaviour and the beauty of his countenance, as "the Lady of Christ's." Milton left Cambridge in July 1632, and retired to his father's country house at Horton, Bucks, where his mother's tomb is still to be seen in the parish church. In this beautiful and sequestered hamlet he spent nearly six years in arduous self-education, taking poetry as his solemn vocation; and here he read the Greek and Latin writers, bringing to their study "a spirit and judgment equal or superior." It was during this period (1632–

1638) that Milton composed *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas*, and *Comus*. The last-mentioned was a masque, the music by Henry Lawes, written in 1637 to be performed at Ludlow Castle by the family of the Earl of Bridgewater. It was anonymously printed at the time, and in 1638 *Lycidas* was included in a garland of elegies over Edward King. These were the first, and long the only, public appearances of Milton, and these were semi-private. Milton's mother died in 1637, and the poet prepared for foreign travel. Before he started for Italy, he consulted the great Provost of Eton, Sir Henry Wotton, who knew Italy thoroughly. He received the famous advice, *Pensieri stretti, ed il viso sciolto* ("Keep your thoughts shut up and your eyes open"). Such advice was doubtless needed by the fearless and dreamy Puritan poet. Milton reached Paris early in 1638, and by August was in Florence, where he spent two months. Here he was cordially received by the Academies, and recited not Latin merely but even Italian verses with applause. The poet Francini addressed a eulogistic ode to the Swan from Thames. Milton passed on by Siena to Rome, where his welcome was not so warm as it had been in Tuscany. We know little or nothing of his impressions of Rome, except that his emotions were exquisitely troubled by the beauty of two Roman ladies, one of whom was Leonora Baroni, the famous singer, whom he met and heard at the Palazzo Barberini. In November he went on to Naples, whither he carried an introduction to the great Italian patron of letters, Manso, Marquis of Villa, who entertained him. Towards the end of December 1638, Milton turned north again, abandoning his intention of pushing on to Sicily and Greece. In March 1639 he visited the blind and aged Galileo in his villa at Gioello near Arcetri. From Florence he went over to Venice, where the state of public affairs in England warned him to return home. In June he was with the Diodatis in Geneva: these were the parents of his intimate friend, Carlo Diodati, who had died in August 1638, and for whom he wrote the *Epitaphium Damonis*. In this poem he practically took farewell of Latin verse. In August 1639, returning to London, Milton settled first in lodgings in St. Bride's Churchyard, and then in "a pretty garden-house" in Aldersgate, where he devoted himself to literature. The only other occupation he allowed himself was the education of his nephews, for he was beginning to take a particular interest in the formation of the youthful mind. In the summer of 1643, he abruptly and perhaps injudiciously married Mary Powell, the daughter of an Oxfordshire J.P., a convinced Cavalier. But his austere life had ill fitted him to cajole a lively young woman, and after a few weeks Mrs. Milton fled back to her family. Oddly enough, Milton seems to have settled down at once to compose arguments in favour of divorce, while apparently desiring nothing more than to be reconciled to his wife, who in fact, two years later, returned to him. From 1641 to 1645 Milton was engaged in the

John Milton, æt. 9

Engraved by Cipriani from a Portrait ascribed to Cornelis Janssen

Sigebertus Wiffi saxonum tyrannus leges patrias conculcans, mentas suis earum stabilimentis rem. l. 1. Sto.

Richard the 2d in his 21 yeare holding a violent parlament shortenid his dayes see in Sto. the violences of that parl see other tyrannicall acts an 21. and of this parl. Holinsh. 490.

his deposition See de Rege out of Sr Tho Smith p. of Gov

and Basil. [illegible] See [illegible] Holinsh. 496.

Tyrannicall practises of Lich. and his accomplices See Holinsh p. 456. an. reg. 11. 457. 458. 462. 48. see also the parl Holinsh 490. 497. blank charters 496. and alle tyrannicall actions ibid. see also the articles against him in parliament. Holin 502. also 508.

Against tyranny the Lord [illegible] by using the cruel tyrant [illegible] of Germanie brought [illegible] See in the Book that he all his [illegible] and his subjects for consider the difference of power in the Lords he was [illegible] into so [illegible] weare [illegible] vaunted of his [illegible] pay by y[e] [illegible] that he [illegible] that grand taxation &c. [illegible] Lyttleton also he [illegible] to country [illegible] and 200. p. 561

Whether it be lawfull to rise against a tyrant Sr Thomas Smith prudently answers that the common people judge of that act according to the event and successe and the learned according to the purpose of the doers Sr com. weare. Engl. C.S.

[illegible] a certain German tyrant, despite the people who had decreed him, [illegible] his younger brother was in his great tirany. Hist Franc. l. [illegible]

[illegible] of the deposing of a tirant and proceeding against him. Richard the 2d was not only deposed by parliament, but sute made by the commons that he might have judgement decreed against him to avoid further mischief in the realme Holinsh. 512.

Petrus Mantuanus [illegible] Sed qui potestatem regiam eiquant certis legibus reput praescribunt, ut hodie electores regni Sr. licere, si principes pacta, et promissa non observent, eum in ordinem cogere, ac si adhuc [illegible] conditiones, et pacta quae fuerat pollicitus, compleat, idq; belli armis cum [illegible] alitor fieri non possit idemq; authorem Polydore nostros homines aliquando suos reges compulisse ad rationem reddendae pecuniae male administratae.

[illegible] male imperatorem spectatis Hoplitis urgere metuunt principes Germaniae see quae in re [illegible] Europaei regis majestas sanctior putat esse ut qui fortunae iste autem regem [illegible] causas accusationibus appetere. Vide Sleidan. l. 18 200.

Vitam primipilum dum rogam, et pedo solliciam, eliam eorum, qui rem nostram [illegible] in hoc [illegible] felices habent videant. Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Colloquia [illegible] l. 8. c. 13. p. 684.

De monarchia Gallica ad tyrannidem Turcicam redigendi consilium Bleseis fuisse initum a regis Car. regina matre, alijs tradit Thuanus. et nobilis ejus ut efficeret, et sane commodas a posset quadam explicatam [illegible] narrat. Hist. l. 57. p. 970

Regem a subditis potestate exuti, aut minui, nulli [illegible] recensitatione re inter reges quidem juramenta postea placant exempla recentis memoriae extant, unum hic l. 71. 423.

publication of incessant controversial pamphlets on political and ethical subjects. In September 1645 he moved into a larger house, in the Barbican, where, after the battle of Naseby, he generously gave a home to his wife's now bankrupt family; here Mr. Powell died in January 1647, and the father of Milton two months later. Another change of residence took the poet, in the autumn of the same year, to High Holborn. In these years the majority of his sonnets were written; he was living in the most studious retirement, little affected by public events. But in March 1649, the republican Council of State offered him the post of Latin Secretary, and he at once accepted it, perhaps incautiously, since his eyesight was already failing. His conduct in this office was stained with fanaticism and violence, and his physical faculties were taxed to their extreme limit. This is the period of Milton's furious controversies with Salmasius and others. In 1652 his wife died, and he had now become completely blind, his last rays of eyesight wasted on such ignoble raillery as the *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1650). In November 1656 Milton married his second wife, Catherine Woodcock, his "late espoused saint," in whom "love, sweetness, goodness shined." We know little else concerning her, and she died in childbirth in February 1658. Through all these years, the isolation of Milton is very remarkable; he had few friends, and almost his only intimate at this time was the Puritan poet, Andrew Marvell, who, in 1657, was appointed to assist him in his official work; he had probably for a long while helped him unofficially. Milton was now living in a house in Petty France, whence, in May 1660, he fled to a friend in Bartholomew Close, where he lay in hiding for six months in danger of his life. It used to be supposed that Milton had been a great factor in Commonwealth politics; this idea is now exploded, and "it is probable that he owed his immunity to his insignificance and his harmlessness." After having remained for some time shadowed by the Serjeant-at-arms, Milton had two of his books burned by the hangman, and was then discharged on the 15th of December 1660. Up to this time, Milton had lived in easy circumstances, but he now sank into what was almost poverty. After several changes of residence, he settled in 1662 into a little new

John Milton

From an original Portrait in the possession of Lord Leconfield at Petworth

house in Bunhill Row, where he lived until his death. Here "an ancient clergyman of Dorsetshire, Dr. Wright, found John Milton in a small chamber, hung with rusty green, sitting in an elbow chair, and dressed neatly in black; pale, but not cadaverous, his hands and fingers gouty, and with chalk-stones." He had always a garden, in every change of house, and would walk for several hours in it each day. In February 1663 he married a third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, who perhaps helped the old man to cope with his three graceless and unruly daughters. Deborah, the youngest of these, was his amanuensis, and is supposed to have written *Paradise Lost* from his dictation. The main composition of that poem occupied, it is believed, from 1658 to 1663. When the plague broke out in 1665, Milton retired to the village of Chalfont St. Giles, and there he placed in the hands of Ellwood the finished MS. of *Paradise Lost*, which was not published until 1667. He had yet nine years more to live, and much of eternal value to compose. But his life was extremely uneventful. He had begun *Paradise Regained* before he returned from Chalfont St. Giles, and there is every reason to suppose that both it and even the *Samson Agonistes* had been completed by September 1667. They were published together in 1671, and the *Poems*, in a second and enlarged edition, in 1673. In the last seven years of his life Milton wrote no more poetry. His health gradually failed, but "he would be very cheerful even in his gout fits, and sing." He died on Sunday, November 8, 1674, and was buried in the chancel of St. Giles, Cripplegate. In 1790 his tomb was profaned, the coffin broken open, and the bones dispersed by the parish authorities.

John Milton

After the Portrait by Pieter Van der Plaas

Cavalier Lyrists

Other lyrics there were less imperishable than Milton's, yet excellent in their way, and vastly more popular than those. Almost without exception, such lyrics were the work of non-professional authors — soldiers, clergymen, or college wits—thrown off in the heat of youth, and given first to the world posthumously, by the piety of some friend. Of the leading lyrists of the earlier Cavalier group of the reign of Charles I., WILLIAM HABINGTON was the only one who certainly

published his poems in his lifetime. The forerunner of them all, and potentially the greatest, was THOMAS CAREW, who as early as 1620 was probably writing those radiant songs and "raptures" which were not printed until twenty years later. To an amalgam of Carew and Donne (whose poems, also, were first published posthumously, in 1633) most of the fashionable poetry written in England between 1630 and 1660 may be attributed. Carew invented a species of love-poetry which exactly suited the temper of the time. It was a continuation of the old Elizabethan pastoral, but more personal, more ardent, more coarse, and more virile. He was the frankest of hedonists, and his glowing praise of woman has genuine erotic force. In technical respects, the flexibility and solidity of his verse was remarkable, and, though he greatly admired Donne, he was able to avoid many of Donne's worst faults. Carew cultivated the graces of a courtier; he was a Tibullus holding the post of sewer-in-ordinary to King Charles I. His sensuality, therefore, is always sophisticated and well-bred, and he is the father of the whole family of gallant gentlemen, a little the worse for wine, who chirruped under Celia's window down to the very close of the century. Indeed, to tell the truth, what began with Carew may be said to have closed with Congreve.

John Milton, æt. 62

Engraved by Faithorne for the "History of Britain," 1670, probably after the crayon portrait at Bayfordbury.

See frontispiece to this volume.

Milton's Cottage at Chalfont St. Giles

Thomas Carew (1594?–1644?) was one of the eleven children of Sir Matthew Carew, Master in Chancery, and of his wife, Alice Ingpenny, Lady Rivers. Very little is definitely known of this poet's career, but he was born, probably in 1594, at West Wickham, in Kent. In June 1608, he entered Merton College, Oxford, and the Middle Temple in January 1611. He did little at law, and in 1613 was sent, as an attaché, to the English ambassador at Venice, Sir Dudley Carleton; to whom, in 1616, we find him acting as secretary at the Hague. He was very shortly dismissed for misconduct, and returning to London, fell into vagrant and debauched habits. In 1619, however, he was permitted to accompany Lord Herbert of Cherbury on an embassy to France, where he remained, perhaps, until 1624. After his return to England, he seems to have ingratiated himself with the court, and in 1628, he was appointed gentleman of the privy-chamber, and sewer (or taster of the royal dishes) to the king. A scandalous story, preserved by Sir John Percival, shows that Carew possessed readiness and tact in the office of a courtier. He lived a very unseemly life almost to the last, but, falling into "sickness and agony," was just in time to redeem his faults by a public repentance on his death-bed. This, however, came so late, that John Hales, of Eton (1584–1656), who was attending him, "told him he should have his prayers, but would by no means give him either the sacrament or absolution." It is believed that Carew came up from West Horsley to King Street, Westminster, when he felt he was dying, and that Hales visited him in those lodgings. There, too, he probably died, perhaps in 1644. He published the masque of *Coelum Britanicum* in 1634, and *Poems* in 1640. Carew had many friends among the Cavalier poets of

Thomas Carew

After Vandyck's Portrait in his Majesty's Collection at Windsor Castle

his time, and was, in particular, intimate with Donne, Ben Jonson, Suckling, and Davenant. His portrait, now in Windsor Castle, was painted by Vandyck, and is one of the finest representations of a seventeenth-century poet which we possess.

POEMS.

By

THOMAS CAREW

Eſquire.

One of the Gentlemen of the Privie-Chamber, and Sewer in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

LONDON,

Printed by *I. D.* for *Thomas Walkley*, and are to be ſold at the ſigne of the flying Horſe, between Brittains Burſe, and York-Houſe.

1640.

Title-page of Carew's Poems

ASK ME NO MORE.

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose,
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day,
For, in pure love, heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past,
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars light
That downwards fall in dead of night,
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixèd become as in their sphere.

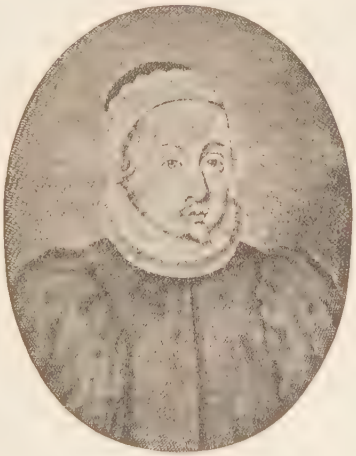
Ask me no more if east or west
The Phœnix builds her spicy nest,
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

SONG.

You that will a wonder know,
Go with me;
Two suns in a heaven of snow
Both burning be:
All they fire, that but eye them,
Yet the snow's unmelted by them.

Leaves of crimson tulips met
Guide the way
Where two pearly rows be set,
As white as day;
When they part themselves asunder,
She breathes oracles of wonder.

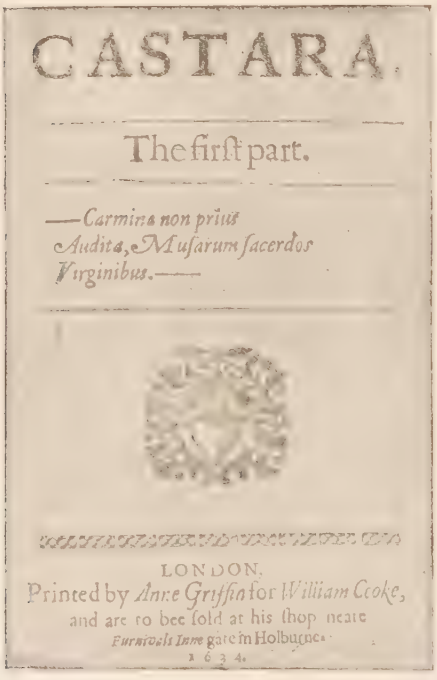
. . . . . .



John Hales of Eton

View of St. Omer in the Seventeenth Century

William Habington (1605–1654) belonged to an ancient Catholic family and was the son of Thomas Habington and his wife, Mary Parker, daughter of Lord Morley; it was this lady, the Hon. Mrs. Habington, who is believed to have written the letter which revealed the Gunpowder Plot. William was born at Hindlip Hall, in Worcestershire, on the 4th of November 1605, and was educated at St. Omer and at Paris, with the purpose of becoming a Jesuit. On arriving at man's estate, however, he found that he had no vocation for the priesthood, and returned to England. About 1632 he married the Hon. Lucy Herbert, Lord Powis's second daughter; she was the "Castara" of Habington's poems. In 1634 these were published, with enlarged editions in 1635 and 1640. Habington, according to Wood, "ran with the times, and was not unknown to Oliver the Usurper." In 1640 he published a prose *History of Edward IV.* and a tragi-comedy of *The Queen of Arragon.* His last work was *Observations upon History*, 1641. Habington lived, "an accomplished gentleman," at his father's house until the death of Thomas Habington in 1647, and then for five years was himself the master of Hindlip Hall, where he died on the 30th of November 1654.


CASTARA.

The first part.

—Carmina non prius
Audita, Musarum sacerdos
Virginibus.——

LONDON,
Printed by *Anne Griffin* for *William Cooke*,
and are to bee sold at his shop neare
Furnivals Inne gate in Holburne.
1634.

Title-page of Habington's "Castara"

TO CUPID.

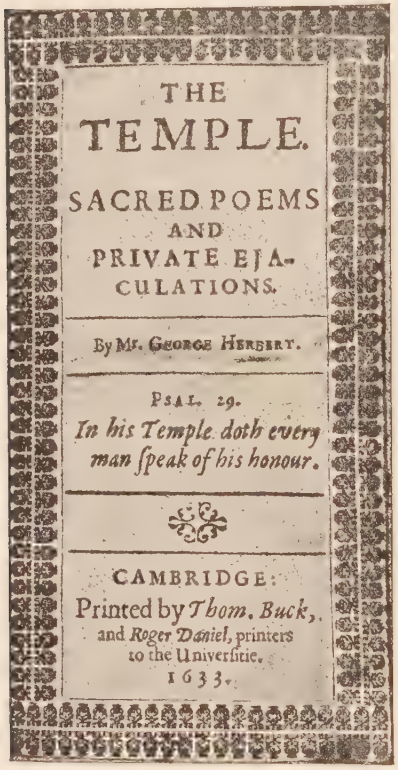
Nimble boy, in thy warm flight,
What cold tyrant dimmed thy sight?
Had'st thou eyes to see my fair,
Thou would'st sigh thyself to air,
Fearing, to create this one,
Nature had herself undone.
But if you, when this you hear,
Fall down murdered through your ear,
Beg of Jove that you may have
In her cheek a dimpled grave.
Lily, rose, and violet
Shall the perfumed hearse beset;
While a beauteous sheet of lawn
O'er the wanton corpse is drawn:
And all lovers use this breath:—
"Here lies Cupid blest in death."

Other Cavalier lyrists are Sir JOHN SUCKLING, who wrote some fifteen years later, and RICHARD LOVELACE, who indited the typical song of aristocratic insubordination, as late as 1642 and onwards. The courtly race re-emerged after the Restoration in Sedley and Dorset, and was very melodiously revived in Rochester. Like his latest scholar, Carew made a very pious end; but the lives of all these men had been riotous and sensuous, and their songs were struck from their wild lives like the sparks from their rapiers. Of a different class, superficially, were the lyrics of Habington and of GEORGE HERBERT, a devout Catholic gentleman and a mystical Anglican priest. Here there was more artifice than in Carew, and less fire. Herbert, in particular, is the type of the maker of conceits. Full of delicate ingenuity, he applies the tortured methods of Donne to spiritual

Sir John Suckling

From a Portrait after Vandyck

experience, gaining more lucidity than his master at the expense of a good deal of intensity. But Herbert also, in his own field, was a courtier, like the lyrists of the Flesh, and he is close to Suckling and the other Royalists in the essential temper of his style. He was himself a leader to certain religious writers of the next generation, whose place is at the close of this chapter.


THE
TEMPLE.
SACRED POEMS
AND
PRIVATE EJA-
CULATIONS.
By Mr. GEORGE HERBERT.
PSAL. 29.
In his Temple doth every man speak of his honour.
CAMBRIDGE:
Printed by *Thom. Buck*,
and *Roger Daniel*, printers
to the Universitie.
1633.

Title-page of Herbert's "Temple"

The *Temple* is by far the best-known book of verses of the whole school, and it deserves, if hardly that pre-eminence, yet all its popularity. Herbert has an extraordinary tenderness, and it is his privilege to have been able to clothe the common aspirations, fears, and needs of the religious mind in language more truly poetical than has been employed by any other Englishman. He is often extravagant, but rarely dull or flat; his greatest fault lay in an excessive pseudo-psychological ingenuity, which was a snare to all these lyrists, and in a tasteless delight in metrical innovations, often as ugly as they were unprecedented. He sank to writing in the shape of wings and pillars and altars. On this side, in spite of the beauty of their isolated songs and passages, the general decadence of the age was apparent in the lyrical writers. There was no principle of poetic style recognised, and when the spasm of creative passion was over, the dullest mechanism seemed good enough to be adopted. There are whole pages of Suckling and Lovelace which the commonest poetaster would now blush to print, and though it may be said that few of these writers lived to see their poems through the press, and had therefore no opportunity for selection, the mere preservation of so much crabbed rubbish cannot be justified.

Sir John Suckling (1609–1640) was born at Whitton House, Twickenham, and was baptized on the 10th of February 1609. "His father was but a dull fellow," but he took after his mother, a brilliant woman, sister to Lord Treasurer Middlesex; she died in 1613. Suckling was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge; he early showed a remarkable talent for languages. His father died in 1627, leaving large estates to his young son of eighteen. Suckling started for the Grand Tour, and in 1631, being in Germany, he joined the Marquis of Hamilton's army, and fought under Gustavus Adolphus at Leipzig and Magdeburg. He returned to England late in 1632, bringing with him a splendid reputation for physical and intellectual accomplishments. He was famous

at court "for ready and sparkling wit"; he was rich, handsome, and extravagantly ostentatious, but he gambled so recklessly that one day his sisters came to the Piccadilly bowling-green "crying for the fear he should lose all their portions." About 1635, his fortunes having become impaired by the absurd magnificence of his life, Suckling, who had lately been knighted, fell into disgrace with the king, and was dismissed the court. But that "merry wench," Lady Moray, as is told us in a pleasant anecdote by Aubrey, would not forsake an old friend, and her example soon prevailed, even with the king. In 1637 was circulated *The Sessions of the Poets*, and in 1638 *Aglaura*. By care he seems to have recovered his fortunes, for we find him travelling "like a young prince for all manner of equipage and convenience, with a cart-load of books." His play, *The Goblins*, was produced in 1638, and in 1639 he printed a third drama, *The Discontented Colonel*. At the breaking out of the Civil War, Suckling spent £12,000 in fitting out a troop of horsemen in the king's service; but these splendid fellows, in their white doublets and scarlet breeches and feathers, fled at Dunse like their dingier brethren. Suckling lost fame, fortune, and confidence in the future of his country; he found himself involved in a Royalist plot, and his nerve seems to have betrayed him. Flying to Paris, and finding himself reduced to penury, he bought poison from an apothecary and killed himself. The exact date of this event is not known; but it probably occurred before the winter of 1641, when his posthumous papers began to be published. According to another account, he was murdered by his valet. His poems and plays were first collected, as *Fragmenta Aurea*, in 1646. Suckling was three times painted by Vandyck; he had sandy hair, very bright and roguish eyes, and "a brisk and graceful look." He was the type of the careless, elegant, witty cavalier who lived for pleasure and gallantry.

Frontispiece to Suckling's "Fragmenta Aurea" of 1646

ORSAME'S SONG IN "AGLAURA."

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame, this will not move:
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her:
The devil take her!

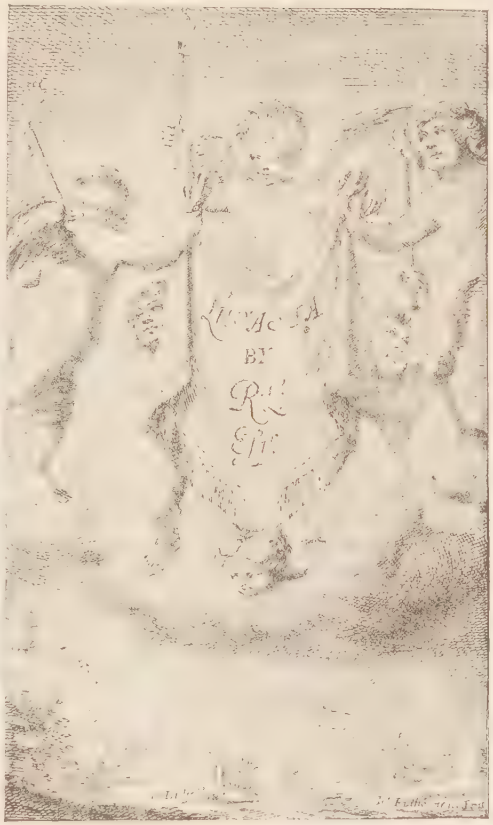
THE LUTE SONG IN "THE SAD ONE" (1658).

Hast thou seen the down in the air,
When wanton blasts have tossed it?
Or the ship on the sea,
When ruder winds have crossed it?
Hast thou marked the crocodile's weeping,
Or the fox's sleeping?
Or hast viewed the peacock in his pride,
Or the dove by his bride,
When he courts for his lechery?
Oh, so fickle, oh, so vain, oh, so false, so false is she!

Richard Lovelace
From an Engraving by Hollar

Richard Lovelace (1618–1658), one of the most unfortunate victims of our civil wars, was born at Woolwich in 1618. He was educated at Charterhouse and (1634) at Gloucester Hall, Oxford. He was early "much admired and adored by the female sex," and at the age of but eighteen was, at the request of a great lady to Archbishop Laud, made M.A. in presence of the king and queen. Lovelace entered the army, and in 1639 served as an ensign in the Scotch expedition. After the disaster at Berwick, he withdrew to Lovelace Place, his ancestral residence, whence he emerged in 1642 to represent the Kentish gentry when they petitioned Parliament to restore the king. For this offence the poet was imprisoned (April 30) in the Gatehouse at Westminster; and here he wrote "Stone walls do not a prison make."

He was discharged on bail after six weeks' confinement. He continued to spend his money and energy in the king's service. In 1646 he became the colonel of a regiment in France, and was wounded at Dunkirk. Two years later, returning to England, he was arrested, with his younger brother, Captain Dudley Posthumous Lovelace, and shut up in Petre House, Aldersgate Street, then a political prison. While Lovelace was confined here, he took occasion to see his volume of lyrical poems, called *Lucasta* (1649), through the press. After the execution of Charles I., Lovelace was set at liberty, but, his fortune by this time being all consumed, he "grew very melancholy, which brought him at length into a consumption"; he "became very poor in body and purse, was the object of charity, went in ragged clothes (whereas when he was in his glory he wore cloth of gold and silver), and mostly lodged in obscure and dirty places, more befitting the worst of beggars." It is to be feared that this shocking state of things lasted nine or ten years, for it was not until 1658 that Colonel Lovelace died in a very mean lodging in Gunpowder Alley, Shoe Lane. He was buried in the tomb of his family in the church of St. Bride. Lovelace, before his misfortunes, was "incomparably graceful, which drew respect from all men and women." Dulwich College possesses portraits of Lovelace and of his "Althea," but who the latter was has never been discovered. His posthumous poems were published in 1659.



Title-Page to Lovelace's "Lucasta"
Engraved by Faithorne

TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON.

When love with unconfined wings
  Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
  To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair,
  And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
  Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
  With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses bound,
  Our hearts with loyal flames;

When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free,
Fishes that tipple in the deep,
Know no such liberty.

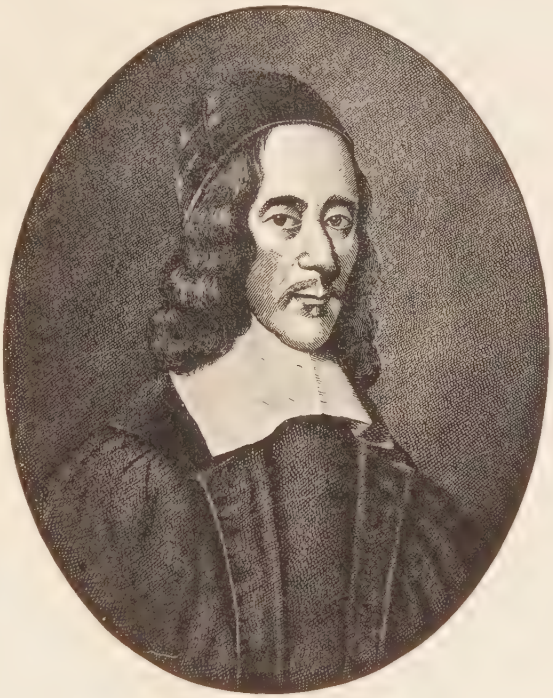
When, like committed linnets, I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
And glories of my King ;
When I shall voice aloud, how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargèd winds that curl the flood
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage ;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage ;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

George Herbert (1593–1633) was the fourth of the ten children of Richard Herbert of Montgomery Castle, and Magdalen Newport of High Ercall, his wife. The poet, whose elder brother was the philosopher EDWARD, afterwards LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY (1583–1648), was born in his father's castle, on the 3rd of April 1593. The father died in 1597, and the mother removed to Oxford; here George was educated at home until 1605, when he was sent to Westminster School, where he remained for four years. In May 1609 he was admitted a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, took his degree in 1613, became a fellow of his college in 1614, and public orator in 1619. This latter office was then "the finest place in the University, though not the gainfullest"; George Herbert discharged its duties with elegance and a grave gaiety until 1627. He proved a subtle and pleasing courtier, and it was his design to prepare himself for political life, and for the office of a Secretary of State. His mother, however, strongly objected to this, and, supported it would seem by Donne, who was her very dear and tried friend, she urged George Herbert rather in the direction of the Church. His conscience was touched, but he seemed at first to have little or no vocation for a holy life. He resigned his offices at Cambridge, however, and withdrew to "a retreat in Kent, where he lived very privately," endeavouring to make up his mind as to his future business. This mental and moral anxiety, and perhaps also the cessation of social duties, greatly impaired his health, and he was threatened with consumption. He was not yet a priest, but already

Lord Herbert of Cherbury

in 1623 he had accepted the lay rectorship of Whitford, and in 1626 the prebend of Leighton Bromswold. This had been followed in 1627 by the death of his adored and saint-like mother. Still George Herbert hesitated before taking the final step, and exactly when he was ordained is still not known. But in 1628, in order to recover his health, he went to stay with his kinsman, the Earl of Danby, at Dauntsey, in Wilts, and there met a cousin, Jane Danvers, who had "become so much a platonic as to fall in love with Mr. Herbert unseen. This was a fair preparation for a marriage," and after some delay they were united on the 5th of March 1629. By this time George Herbert was certainly in orders, and in April 1630 he was presented to the rectory of Fugglestone-cum-Bemerton, which he has made so famous. Here, in the brief remainder of his life, almost all his sacred poems were written. Of his holy behaviour in his parish, "an almost incredible story," Izaak Walton has given a beautiful description. He spent his money on having the church restored, and the adjoining chapel adorned. George Herbert devoted himself with intense concentration to a zealous interpretation of his clerical duties, and almost his only relaxation was a walk, twice a week, into Salisbury and back. His health steadily declined, and, a few weeks before his death, he gave to a friend who waited upon him a little book of MS. poems, which he desired his visitor to give to Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding, to publish or burn as he saw fit. This was the celebrated *Temple*. George Herbert "lived like a saint, unspotted of the world, full of alms-deeds, full of humility"; and his death, which took place in his rectory of Bemerton, on the 3rd of March 1633, was a portent of edification. Almost his last action was to call for one of his instruments, for he was a great musician, and to play and sing one of his own poems, "The Sundays of Man's Life." *The Temple* was published (in the first instance for private circulation) immediately after his death, and his prose *Remains* in 1652; they were among the most successful productions of the seventeenth century. Izaak Walton in 1670 wrote that more than twenty thousand copies of *The Temple* had been sold "since the first impression." Herbert destroyed his secular poems in MS. when he adopted the religious life.



George Herbert

After an Engraving by R. White

Aaron.

Holiness on the head,
Light and perfections on the breast,
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead
To lead them unto life and rest:
Thus are true Aarons drest.

Profaneness in my head,
Defects and darkness in my breast,
A noise of passions ringing me for dead
Unto a place where is no rest:
Poor priest, thus am I drest.

Only another head
I have, another heart and breast,
Another music, making live, not dead,
Without whom I could have no rest:
In Him I am well drest.

Christ is my only head,
My alone-only heart and breast,
My only music striking me ev'n dead,
That to the old man I may rest,
And be in Him new-drest.

So holy in my head,
Perfect and light in my dear breast,
My doctrine tun'd by Christ, who is not dead,
But lives in me while I do rest,
Come, people; Aaron's drest.

The Pulley.

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessing standing by;
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches which dispersèd lie
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flow'd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness:
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.

A word must be spared for THOMAS RANDOLPH, a "son" of Ben Jonson, whose early death seems to have robbed us of a poet of much solidity and intellectual weight. He came nearer, perhaps, than any other man of his time to the sort of work that the immediate successors of Malherbe were just then doing in France; he may, for purposes of parallelism, be not inaptly styled an English Racan. His verse, stately and hard, full of thought rather than of charm, is closely modelled on the ancients, and inspires respect rather than affection. Randolph is a poet for students, and not for the general reader; but he marks a distinct step in the transition towards classicism.

Thomas Randolph (1605–1635) was born at Newnham-cum-Badby in June 1605. He showed from childhood an invincible determination to be a poet and a scholar; "when other boys (his elders) played with nuts, books were his toys." He was educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he resided from 1624 to 1632. His poverty and the irregularity of his life are said to have shortened his days; he early attracted the admiring attention of Ben Jonson, who "ever after called him Son." Evidences of his attachment to Jonson abound in the poetry of Randolph. His *Aristippus* was printed in 1630, his play of *The Jealous Lovers* in 1632; these pieces had been played by students at Cambridge. Randolph was visiting his friend, William Stafford, at his house at Blatherwick, in Northamptonshire, when he died, it is not known of what disease; he was buried on the 17th of March 1635. His best writings, namely his comedy of *The Muses' Looking-Glass*, his pastoral of *Amyntas*, and his lyrical poems, were posthumously published in 1638, by his younger brother, Robert. Sir Christopher Hatton caused a bust of white marble, wreathed with laurel, to be raised above Randolph's tomb in the aisle of Blatherwick Church. The few anecdotes preserved about Randolph show him to have been a merry companion, ardent in the pursuit of letters, but without affectation or pedantry.

Thomas Randolph

After an Engraving by W. Marshall

Revival of Prose

About 1640 there was an almost simultaneous revival of interest in prose throughout the country, and a dozen writers of ability adopted this neglected instrument. It is not easy to describe comprehensively a class of literature which included the suavity of Walton, the rich rhetoric of Browne, the arid intelligence of Hobbes, the roughness of Milton, and the easy gaiety of Howell. But we may feel that the reign of Charles I. lacked a Pascal, as that of Elizabeth would have been greatly the better for a Calvin. What the prose of England under the Commonwealth wanted was clearness, a nervous limpidity; it needed brevity of phrase, simplicity and facility of diction. The very best of our prose-authors of that great and uneasy period were apt, the moment they descended from their rare heights of eloquence, to sink into prolixity and verbiage. In escaping mono-

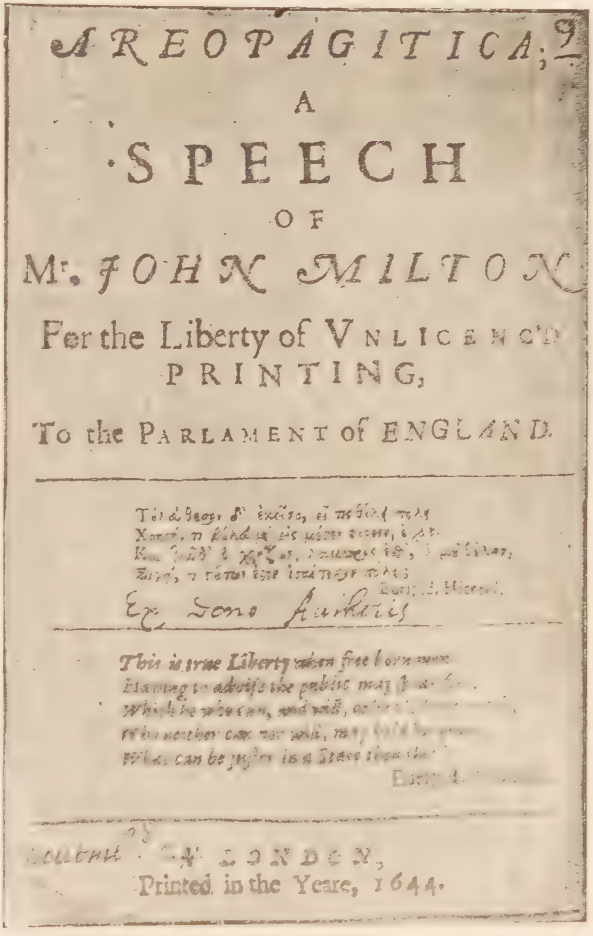
tony, they became capricious; there was an ignorance of law, an insensibility to control. The more serious writers of an earlier period had connived at faults encouraged by the pedantry of James I. This second race, of 1640, were less pedantic, but still languid in invention, too ready to rest upon the ideas of the ancients, and to think all was done when these ideas were re-clothed in brocaded language. But as we descend we find the earnestness and passion of the great struggle for freedom reflected more and more on the prose of the best writers. The divines became something more than preachers; they became Protestant tribunes. The evolution of such events as Clarendon encountered was bound to create a scientific tendency in the writing of history—a tendency diametrically opposed to the "sweet raptures and researching conceits" which Wotton thought praiseworthy in the long-popular *Chronicle* of Sir Richard Baker. Even style showed a marked tendency towards modern forms. At his best Walton was as light as Addison, Browne as brilliantly modulated as Dr. Johnson, while the rude and naked periods of Hobbes directly prepared our language for the Restoration.

Sir Richard Baker (1568–1645), was a Kentish gentleman who was knighted in 1603, fell into great poverty, and about 1635 took shelter from his debts in the Fleet Prison, where he devoted himself to literature. His famous *Chronicle of the Kings of England* appeared in folio in 1643; this book enjoyed an unparalleled vogue for half a century and more, "being a common piece of furniture in almost every country squire's hall." It has, however, no historical value, and after the revival of history in the eighteenth century, it fell into absolute obscurity. Baker never escaped from the Fleet Prison, but died there on the 18th of February 1645 at a very great age. His autobiography, which might have proved more interesting than all his other writings, was spitefully destroyed by his son-in-law.

Milton as a Prose-Writer

Milton as a prose-writer fills us with astonishment. It is the grossest exaggeration to declare, with Macaulay, that his prose is "a perfect field of cloth of gold," although it certainly has embroidered passages of great sublimity. But these are rare, and the poet who, in *Comus*, had known how to obtain effects so pure, so delicate, and so graceful that verse in England has never achieved a more polished amenity, deliberately dropped the lyre for twenty years, and came forward as a persistent prose pamphleteer of so rude and fierce a kind that it requires all our ingenuity to see a relation between what he was in 1635 and was again in 1641. Critics have vied with one another in pretending that they enjoy the invective tracts of Milton; they would persuade us, as parents persuade children to relish their medicine, that the *Apology for Smectymnuus* is eloquent, and *Eikonoklastes* humorous. They try to convince us that the passion for liberty, which was Milton's central characteristic, is agreeably expressed in the pamphlets on divorce. But, if we are candid, we must admit that these tracts are detestable, whether for the crabbed sinuosity of their style, their awkward and unseemly heat in controversy, or for their flat negation of all serenity and grace. If

they were not Milton's we should not read one of them. As they are his, we are constrained to search for beauties, and we find them in the *Areopagitica*, more than half of which is singularly noble, in the exquisite description of Eros and Anteros, and in certain enthusiastic pages, usually autobiographical, which form oases in the desert, the howling desert, of Milton's other pamphlets.



AREOPAGITICA;

A

SPEECH

OF

Mr. JOHN MILTON

For the Liberty of UNLICENC'D PRINTING,

To the PARLAMENT of ENGLAND.

Ἐκ Δωρὸ Φιλίππου

This is true Liberty when free born men

LONDON,

Printed in the Yeare, 1644.

Title-page of Milton's "Areopagitica," First Edition, 1644.

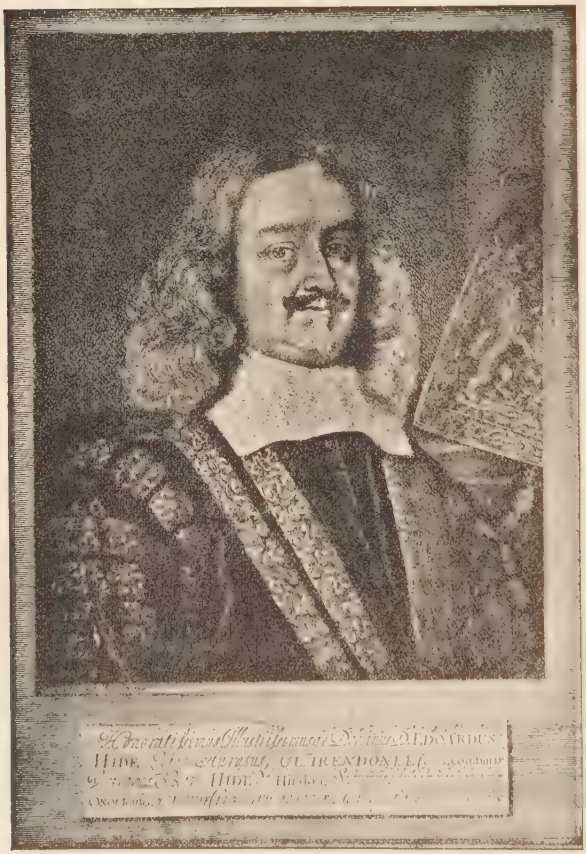
From "Areopagitica."

I deny not, but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors. For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are. Nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragons' teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless warinesse be used as good almost kill a man as kill a good book. Who kills a man, kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth, but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man preserved and stored up in books, since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom, and, if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life.

From "The Ready and Easy Way" (1659).

To make the people fittest to choose, and the chosen fittest to govern, will be to mend our corrupt and faulty education, to teach the people faith, not without virtue, temperance, modesty, sobriety, parsimony, justice; not to admire wealth or honour; to hate turbulence and ambition; to place every one his private welfare and happiness in the public peace, liberty, and safety. They shall not then need to be much mistrustful of their chosen patriots in the grand council; who will then be rightly called the true keepers of our liberty, though the most of their business will be in foreign affairs. But to prevent all mistrust, the people then will have their several ordinary assemblies (which will henceforth quite annihilate the odious power and name of committees) in the chief towns of every county, without the trouble, charge, or time lost of summoning and assembling from far so great a number, and so long residing from their own houses, or removing of their families, to do as much at home in their several shires, entire or subdivided, toward the securing of their liberty, as a numerous assembly of them all formed and convened on purpose with the wariest rotation.

Clarendon



Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon

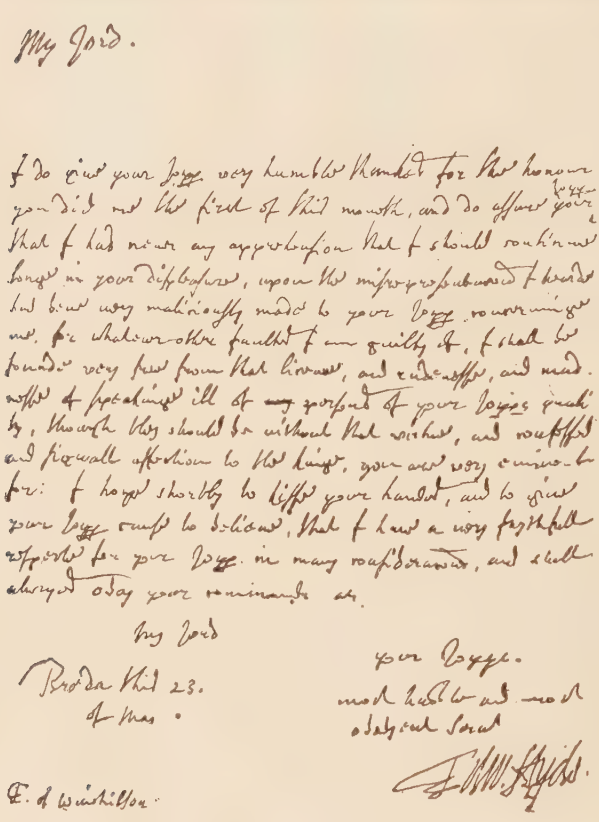
After the Engraving by David Loggan

Clarendon was by a few months Milton's senior, yet in reading him we seem to have descended to a later age. That he owed not a little to the Theophrastian fashion of his youth is certain; but the real portraits which he draws with such picturesque precision are vastly superior to any fantastical abstractions of Overbury or Earle. Clarendon writes, in Wordsworth's phrase, with his eye upon the object, and the graces of his style are the result of the necessity he finds of describing what he wishes to communicate in the simplest and most convincing manner. The *History of the Great Rebellion* is not the work of a student, but of a soldier, an administrator, a practical politician in stirring times. To have acted a great part publicly and spiritedly is not enough, as we are often reminded, to make a man the fit chronicler of what he has seen and done; but in the case of Clarendon these

advantages were bestowed upon a man who, though not a rare artist in words, had a marked capacity for expression and considerable literary training. It is his great distinction that, living in an age of pedants, he had the courage to write history — a species of literature which, until his salutary example, was specially over-weighted with ornamental learning — in a spirit of complete simplicity. The diction of Clarendon is curiously modern; we may read pages of his great book without lighting upon a single word now no longer in use. The claims of the great Chancellor to be counted among the classics of his country were not put forward in the seventeenth century, the first instalment of his history remaining unprinted until 1702–4, and the rest of it ("The Continuation") until 1759.

Edward Hyde, Earl of **Clarendon** (1608–1674) was the son of a Cheshire gentleman of fortune residing at Dinton, near Hindon, in Wilts, where the future historian was born on the 16th of February 1608. He was intended for the Church, and his education began at home; he went up to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, early in 1623. His stay at the University was brief, for, determining to take up the law for a profession, he entered at the Middle Temple at the age of seventeen. He was not called to the Bar until 1633. During the early years of his career in London, Hyde consorted with many of the most brilliant of his contemporaries, of many of whom he has preserved invaluable portraits. He delighted in the best society, and, as he tells us, "never was so proud, or thought myself so good a man, as when I was the worst man in the company." Hyde entered the House of Commons as M.P. for Wootton Basset, in 1640, but in the Long Parliament he represented Saltash. He was not inclined at first to be a partisan, but the vehemence of public feeling forced him to take up a position, and he threw in his lot with the king, and he was expelled from the House in 1642. Charles I., however, knighted him and appointed him Chancellor of the Exchequer and a Privy Councillor; he sat in the Parliament which assembled at Oxford in January 1643. During these years he made All Souls College, Oxford, his residence, until, early in 1645, he felt himself forced to fly with the other leading royalists. He escaped from Pendennis Castle in Cornwall to Jersey, where he joined the Prince of Wales. Here he remained for two years, in undisturbed retirement, and here he began his *History of the Rebellion*. In 1648 he believed it to be his duty to join the royal party in Holland, and he was sent to Spain, where from 1649 to 1651 he held the very irksome position of joint-ambassador extraordinary from Charles II. to the court of Madrid. For the next two years his fortunes were at their lowest; he wrote from Paris in 1652 saying that he had neither clothes nor fire to preserve him from the cold, nor a *livre* to spend on his necessities. He found the frivolous and thankless character of the king extremely irksome, but Charles II. understood Hyde's value, and gave him the titular positions of Secretary of State (1653) and Lord High Chancellor of England (1657). The reward of his fidelity came with the Restoration. Hyde accompanied the king on his progress into London, his daughter married the Duke of York, and he himself was raised to the peerage as Baron Hyde of Hindon. His love of letters was gratified by being made, at the same time, High Steward of the University of Cambridge and Chancellor at Oxford. He had been Lord Hyde only six months, when he was promoted to be Viscount Cornbury and Earl of Clarendon,

and received immense rewards in money and estate. He now "held the first place in his Majesty's confidence, and was Prime Manager, if not Prime Minister, under him." His extravagant success provoked a great deal of jealousy, and in 1663 Clarendon was actually charged with high treason before the Peers; he cleared himself of the accusation, but his prestige declined, and the courtiers persuaded the king that the Chancellor was a check upon his pleasures. As he passed in court, they would whisper to the king, "There goes your schoolmaster." These intrigues succeeded to such an extent, that in August 1667, Clarendon was deprived of the Great Seal, the graceless king remarking that he "was then King of England and never before." To escape impeachment and banishment, Clarendon retired to France, where he underwent an infinitude of discomforts. In April 1668, at Evreux, he was set upon and nearly killed by a party of English sailors, who, it is to be feared, may have been instigated by Charles II. to murder the most faithful and distinguished of his servants. In great depression of health and spirits, Clarendon proceeded to Montpellier, whence he issued a dignified vindication of his conduct. From 1668 to 1672 he resided at Montpellier, immersed in literary work, and then at Moulins. He had travelled to Rouen, perhaps with the intention of returning to England, when he was taken ill there, and died on the 9th of December 1674. His body was brought to London and buried



Letter from the Earl of Clarendon to the Earl of Winchelsea

My Lord,

I do give your Lorp very humble thankes for the honour you did me the first of this month, and do assure your Lorp that I had never any apprehension that I should continue long in your displeasure, upon the misrepresentations I heard had been very maliciously made to your Lorp concerning me, for whatever other faults I am guilty of, I shall be found very free from that license, and rudenesse, and madnesse of speaking ill of persons of your Lorps quality, though they should be without that virtue and confessed and signall affection to the King, you are very eminent for: I hope shortly to kisse your hande, and to give your Lorp cause to believe, that I have a very faythfull respecte for your Lorp in many considerations, and shall always obey your commands, I am

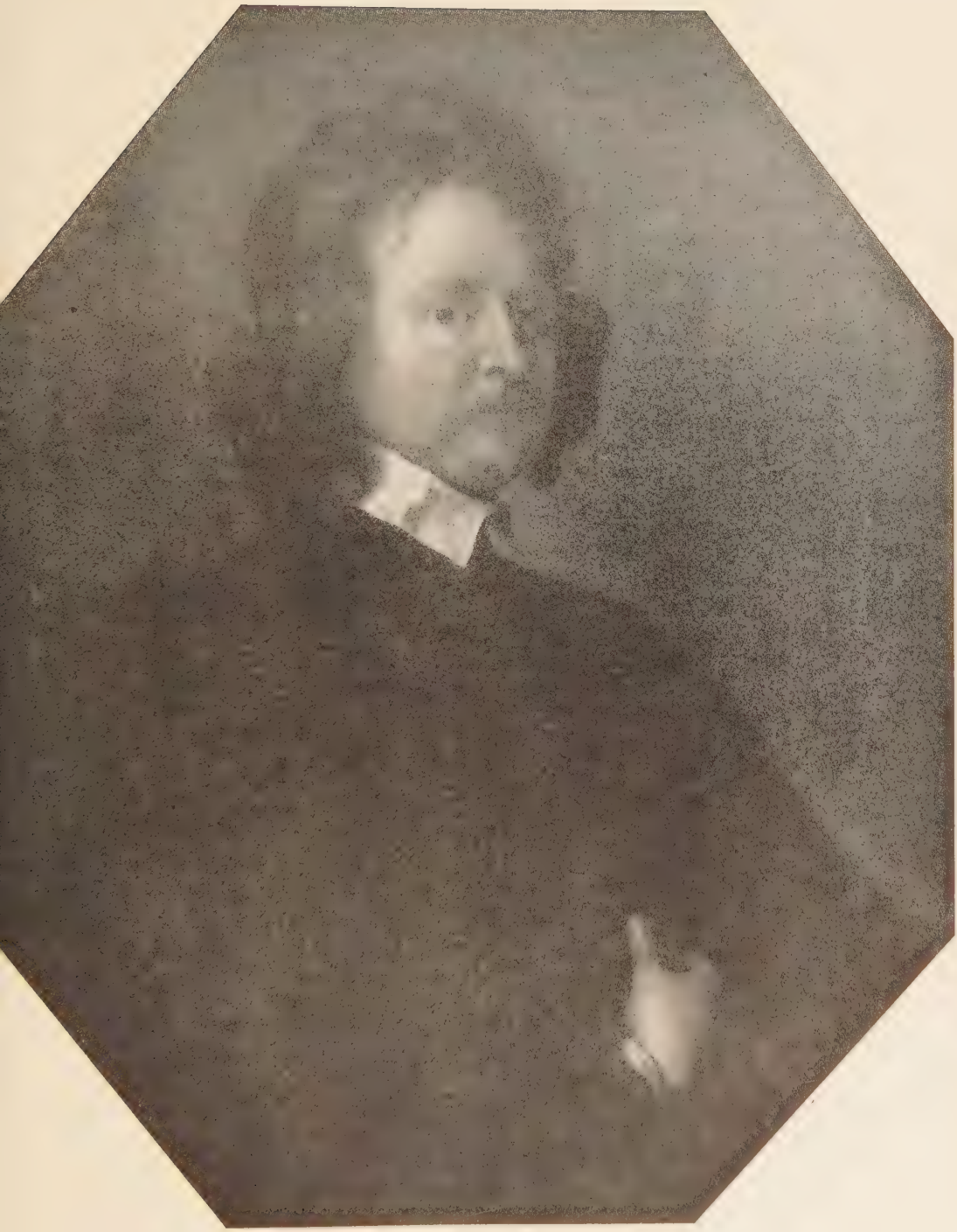
My Lord,

Your Lorps
most humble and most
obedient servt.

Breda, this 23
of Mar.

Edw. Hyde.

E. of Winchelsea.



Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY GERARD SOEST.

in Henry VII.'s Chapel in Westminster Abbey. It is remarkable that Clarendon was the grandfather of two queens of England, Mary II. and Anne. His works were mainly posthumous. His famous *History of the Rebellion* first saw the light, imperfectly, in three volumes, in 1702–04, and was not fully published until 1826–27. In 1811 was issued his *Religion and Policy*, in 1815 his *Essays*, and in 1838 his *Life and Letters*. Clarendon was described in 1668 as "a fair, ruddy, fat, middle-statured, handsome man."

The Character of Charles I.

From the entrance into this unnatural war, his natural cheerfulness and vivacity grew clouded, and a kind of sadness and dejection of spirits stole upon him, which he had never been used to; yet being one of those who believed that one battle would end all differences, and that there would be so great a victory on one side that the other would be compelled to submit to any conditions from the victor—which supposition and conclusion generally sank into the minds of most men, and prevented the looking after many advantages that might then have been laid hold of—he resisted those indispositions. But after the King's return from Brentford, and the furious resolution of the two Houses not to admit any treaty for peace, those indispositions which had before touched him grew into a perfect habit of uncheerfulness; and he who had been so exactly easy and affable to all men, that his face and countenance was always present and vacant to his company, and held any cloudiness or less pleasantness of the visage a kind of rudeness or incivility, became on a sudden less communicable; and thence very sad, pale, and exceedingly afflicted with the spleen. In his clothes and habit, which he had minded before always with more neatness, and industry, and expense, than is usual to so great a soul, he was not now only incurious, but too negligent; and in his reception of suitors, and the necessary or casual addresses to his place, so quick and sharp and severe, that there wanted not some men—strangers to his nature and disposition—who believed him proud and imperious, from which no mortal man was ever more free.

Charles I.
After a Portrait by Vandyck

Jeremy Taylor

In JEREMY TAYLOR we reach one of those delightful figures, all compact of charm and fascination, which tempt the rapid historian to pause for their contemplation. No better words can be used to describe him than were found by his friend, George Rust, when he said: "This great prelate had the good humour of a gentleman, the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, the wisdom of a chancellor, the reason of an angel, and the piety of a saint. He had devotion enough for a cloister, learning enough for a university, and wit

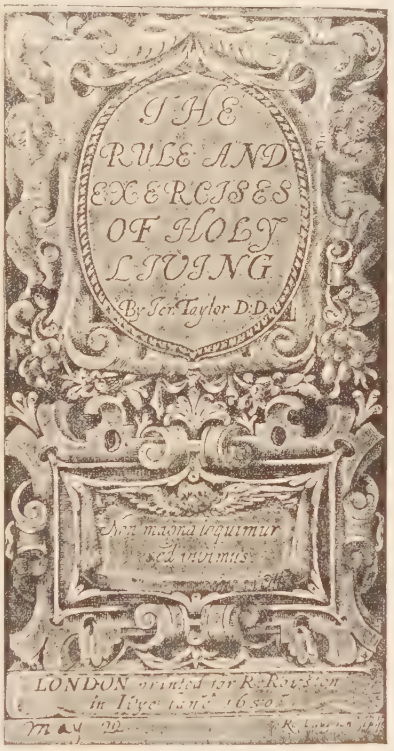
enough for a college of virtuosi." Fancy was the great quality of Taylor, and it covers, as with brocade, all parts of the raiment of his voluminous writings. His was a mind of rare amenity and sweetness; he was an eclectic, and the earliest great divine to free himself completely from the subtleties and "spinosities" of the schools. So graceful are his illustrations and pathetic turns of divinity, that his prose lives in its loftier parts as no other religious literature of the age does, except, perhaps, the verse of George Herbert. Yet even Jeremy Taylor suffers from the imperfections of contemporary taste. His unction is too long drawn, his graces too elaborate and gorgeous, and modern readers turn from the sermons which his own age thought so consummate in their beauty to those more colloquial treatises of Christian exposition and exhortation of which the *Holy Living* and the *Holy Dying* are the types.

Jeremy Taylor

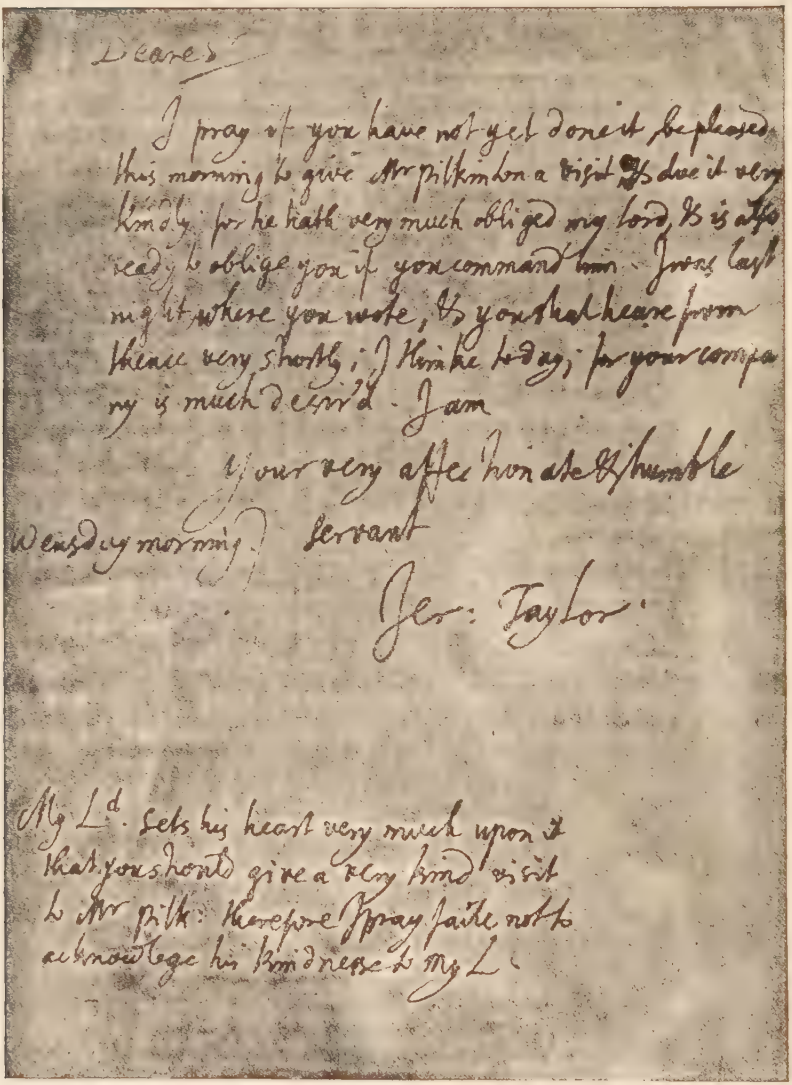
After an Engraving by P. Lombart

Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667) was baptized at Cambridge on the 15th of August 1613. At the age of three he was sent to the Cambridge Free School, and at thirteen was transferred, as a sizar, to Gonville and Caius College. He had very early a tendency towards the Church, and when he was but a curate he lectured for a friend in St. Paul's Cathedral, when Laud, happening to hear him, was so much impressed with his talent, that he induced All Souls College, Oxford, by an extraordinary act, to offer Jeremy Taylor a fellowship on the 20th of October 1635. Later on, Laud made him his chaplain, and gave him the rectory of Uppingham. Before he was twenty-five, Taylor, although without other interest than his talent and piety supplied, found himself well provided for. He presently became chaplain-in-ordinary to Charles I. In 1638 he pub-

lished his first sermon, and in 1642 appeared his famous work on *The Sacred Order of Episcopacy*, for which he was made a D.D. at Oxford. During the Civil War, Jeremy Taylor accompanied the king on many of his campaigns as private chaplain: he was captured at the battle of Cardigan in February 1645, but soon released. When the Royalist cause finally declined, Taylor withdrew to South Wales, where at first he kept a school, and then, in 1647, accepted the hospitality of the Earl of Carbery, at Golden Grove, Caermarthenshire. Here he stayed, acting as chaplain and sometimes as schoolmaster, for ten years, and here he devoted himself to theology. The works he published during this period, in this "retired and agreeable solitude," are very numerous, and include those by which the name of Jeremy Taylor is best known, such as *The Liberty of Prophesying* (1646), *The Funeral Sermon on the Countess of Carbury* (1650), *Holy Living* (1650), *Holy Dying* (1651), *A Discourse of Auxiliary Beauty* (1656), and *A Discourse of Friendship* (1656). In 1657, however, Jeremy Taylor had the poignant sorrow of losing, within a few weeks, two of his sons, "young men of great hopes." He could no longer, after this series of deaths, endure Golden Grove; leaving it abruptly, he came up to London and took charge of a congregation of Episcopalian Loyalists to his eminent personal peril. Lord Conway, solicitous for his safety, urged him to come over into Ireland, and found him an asylum at Lisburn until the Restoration. From Charles II. Jeremy Taylor received every mark of favour, and in January 1661 was appointed Bishop of Down and Connor; to this, six months later, was added by special favour the Bishopric of Dromore, all in Ulster; and he was made Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dublin and a Privy Councillor. All these posts and honours he retained until his death, which happened six years later at Lisburn, on the 13th of August 1667. He was buried in the choir of the Cathedral of Dromore, which he had rebuilt at his own cost. The personal charm of Jeremy Taylor is celebrated by all his contemporaries. One of them, who knew him well, assures us that "he was a person of great humility, and notwithstanding his stupendous parts and learning, and eminency of place, he had nothing in him of pride and humour, but was courteous and affable, and of easy access." Jeremy Taylor possessed "a most sweet and obliging temper, with great candour and ingenuity; there was so much of salt and fineness of wit and prettiness of address in his familiar discourses as made his conversation have all the pleasantness of a comedy and all the usefulness of a sermon." He was twice married, and, for the second time, to Joanna Bridges, the natural daughter of Charles I.



Title-page of Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living"



Deare Sr

I pray if you have not yet done it be pleased this morning to give Mr Pilkinton a visit & doe it very kindly: for he hath very much obliged my Lord & is also ready to oblige you if you command him. I was last night where you wrote, & you shal heare from thence very shortly; I thinke to-day; for your compa ny is much desir'd. I am

Your very affectionate & humble

Wensday morning servant

Jer: Taylor.

My Ld sets his heart very much upon it that you should give a very kind visit to Mr Pilk: therefore I pray faile not to acknowlege his kindness to my Ld.

Letter by Jeremy Taylor to Christopher Hatton

DEARE Sr,

I pray if you have not yet done it be pleased this morning to give Mr Pilkinton a visit, & doe it very kindly: for he hath very much obliged my Lord & is also ready to oblige you if you command him. I was last night, where you wrote, & you shal heare from thence very shortly; I thinke to-day; for your compa ny is much desir'd. I am

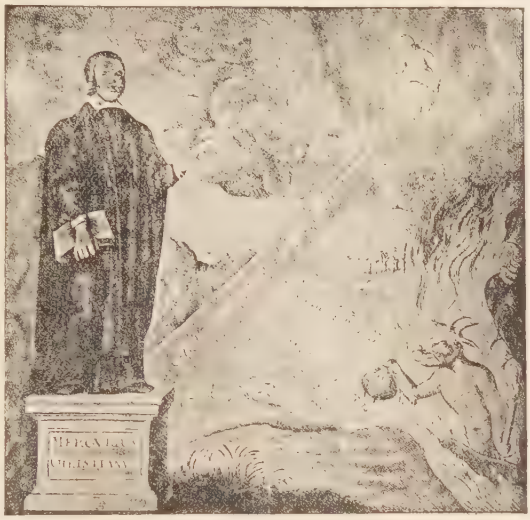
Your very affectionate and humble
Wensday morning. servant

JER. TAYLOR.

My Ld sets his heart very much upon it that you should give a very kind visit to Mr Pilk: therefore I pray faile not to acknowlege his kindness to my Ld.

The Married State

They that enter into the state of marriage cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world next to the last throw for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman, indeed, ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband; she must dwell upon her sorrow, and hatch the eggs which her own folly or infelicity hath produced; and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath a warrant of prerogation, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes; but otherwise she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And though the man can run from many hours of his sadness, yet he must return to it again; and when he sits among his neighbours, he remembers the objection that is in his bosom, and he sighs deeply. The boys and the pedlars and the fruiterers shall tell of this man when he is carried to the grave, that he lived and died a poor wretched person. The stags in the Greek epigram, whose knees were clogged with frozen snow upon the mountains, came down to the brooks of the valleys, hoping to thaw their joints with the waters of the stream; but there the frost overtook them and bound them fast in ice, till the young herdsmen took them in their stronger snare. It is the unhappy chance of many men; finding many inconveniences upon the mountains of single life, they descend into the valleys of marriage to refresh their troubles, and there they enter into fetters, and are bound to sorrow by the cords of a man's or woman's peevishness.



Jeremy Taylor

Frontispiece by Faithorne to "The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living," 1663

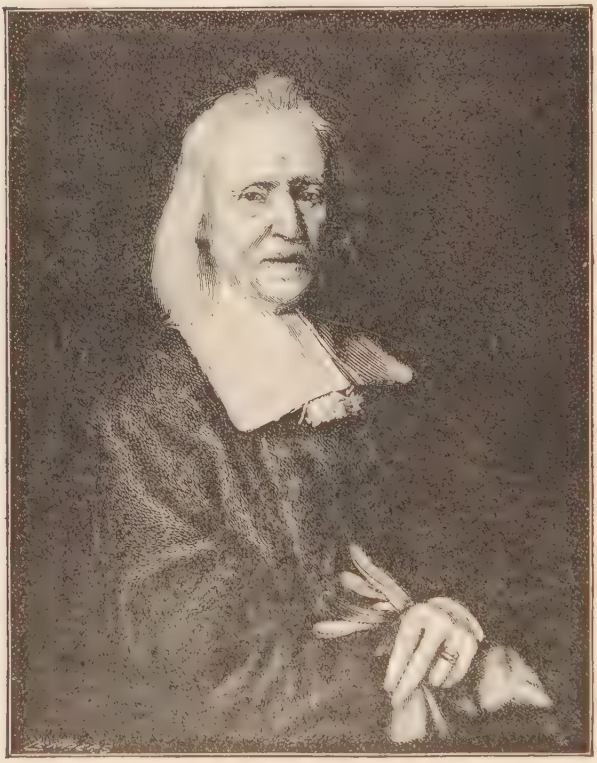
A Good Man

A good man, though unlearned in secular notices, is like the windows of the Temple, narrow without and broad within; he sees not so much of what profits not abroad, but whatsoever is within, and concerns religion and the glorifications of God, that he sees with a broad inspection; but all human learning, without God, is but blindness and ignorant folly.

Izaak Walton

We note with particular interest those prose-writers of the pre-Restoration period who cultivated the easier and more graceful parts of speech and made the transition more facile. As a rule, these were not the writers most admired in their own age, and Izaak Walton, in particular, holds a position now far higher than any which he

enjoyed in his long lifetime. Yet modern biography may almost be said to have begun in those easy, garrulous lives of Donne and Wotton which he printed in 1640 and 1651, while in the immortal *Compleat Angler* we still possess the best-written technical treatise in the English language. Familiar correspondence, too—a delightful department of literature—owes much of its freedom and its prestige to the extremely entertaining and picturesque *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ*, in which JAMES HOWELL surpassed all previous letter-writers in the ease and liveliness of his letters. And among these agreeable purveyors of amusement, civilisers of that over-serious age, must not be omitted THOMAS FULLER, indignant as he might have been at being classed with persons so frivolous. His activity between 1639, when he published the *Holy War*, and 1661, when he died, was prodigious. Without endorsing the extravagant praise of Coleridge, we must acknowledge that the wit of Fuller was amazing, if he produced too many examples of it in forms a little too desultory for modern taste. He was all compact of intellectual vivacity, and his active fancy helped him to a thousand images as his pen rattled along. In such writers we see the age of the journalist approaching, although as yet the newspaper, as we understand it, was not invented. Fuller would have made a superb leader-writer, and Howell an ideal special correspondent. There was little in either of them of the solemnity of the age they lived in, except the long-windedness of their sentences. In them we see English literature eager to be freed from the last fetters of the Renaissance.



Izaak Walton

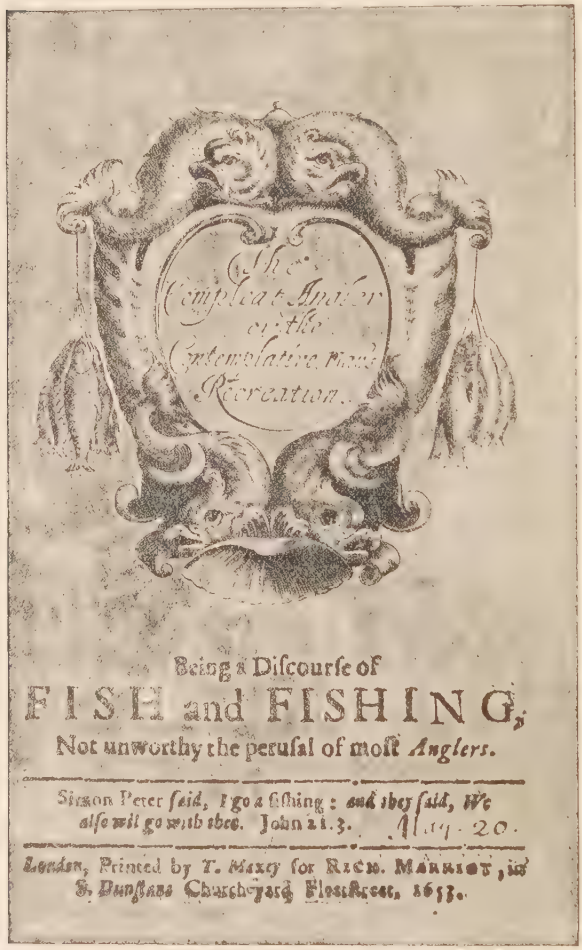
After the Portrait by Jacob Huysman

Izaak Walton (1593–1683) was the son of Jervaise Walton, a yeoman of Stafford, where the future author was born on the 9th of August 1593. He received little education, and came up, still young, to London to engage in trade. It is said that for some time he served at a haberdasher's shop in Whitechapel. Much more certain is that he was apprenticed to Thomas Grisell, an ironmonger of Paddington. To this trade he stuck, for at the age of twenty-five he was made free of the Ironmongers' Company. He had a shop in Fleet Street, two doors west of Chancery Lane, and was one of the parishioners of Donne, as vicar of St. Dunstan's. It was probably about 1628 that Walton became known to Donne, then Dean of St. Paul's, whose life he published in 1640. He left London in 1644, in consequence, it is supposed, of the defeat of the Royalist party at Marston Moor, but he soon returned, and settled in Clerkenwell. In 1651 he issued the *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, to which was prefixed his *Life of Sir Henry Wotton*. It exemplifies the curious regard which was shown to this discreet tradesman, that, after the battle of Worcester, he was chosen to guard the "Lesser George" jewel of the Regalia, which he contrived eventually to pass on to Charles II. At the age of sixty, Walton published *The Compleat Angler*, one of the most famous of English books, in 1653; a revised edition appeared in 1655. Until the Restoration, Izaak Walton appears to have been living quietly at Clerkenwell. We hear of him next in 1662, when George Morley, Bishop of Winchester, who was another survival from the Elizabethan age, offered Walton a home in his palace. Winchester was Walton's home for the remainder of his life, although he paid visits to Cotton in Derbyshire, and doubtless went up to London. In 1665 he printed his *Life of Richard Hooker*, and in 1670 his *Life of George Herbert*, collecting the four famous lives into the one-volume form in

Walton's House in Fleet Street

Charles Cotton

which they have since become familiar. The *Life of Robert Sanderson* was added in 1678. Walton was married twice, his first wife dying in 1640, all her seven children having died in infancy. He presently married again, this time Anne, the half-sister of the celebrated Bishop Thomas Ken (1637–1711); she also died, very shortly before Walton settled in Winchester, but leaving a son and a daughter. The daughter, Anne, eventually married William Hawkins, a prebendary of Winchester. It has been thought that about 1680 Walton moved over from his rooms in the palace to his son-in-law's house; he certainly died in the latter place on the 15th of December 1683. He had entered his ninety-first year; his venerable host, the Bishop, who was little younger, survived him only by a few months. Izaak Walton lies buried in the north transept of Winchester Cathedral, under a black basalt slab. Walton's happy disposition and love of literature, combined with an easy effusiveness of temperament and a constitutional tendency to hero-worship, brought him into communication with a vast number of people from whose society the barriers of his trade would otherwise have excluded him. He forms a curious exception to the aristocratic and professional literary habit of the seventeenth century. He was always graceful, prudent, and serviceable, and he had a genius for retaining the friends he made; Ashmole said that he was "well beloved of all good men." Walton is great in two directions; he is the founder of modern, easy biography; he is the first of our piscatory authors. As Mr. Andrew Lang has excellently said: "Our angling literature is copious, practical, full of anecdote; Walton alone gave it style. He is not so much unrivalled as absolutely alone. Heaven meant him for the place he fills, as it meant the cowslip and the Mayfly."


The Compleat Angler or The Contemplative Mans Recreation.

Being a Discourse of

FISH and FISHING,

Not unworthy the perusal of most *Anglers*.

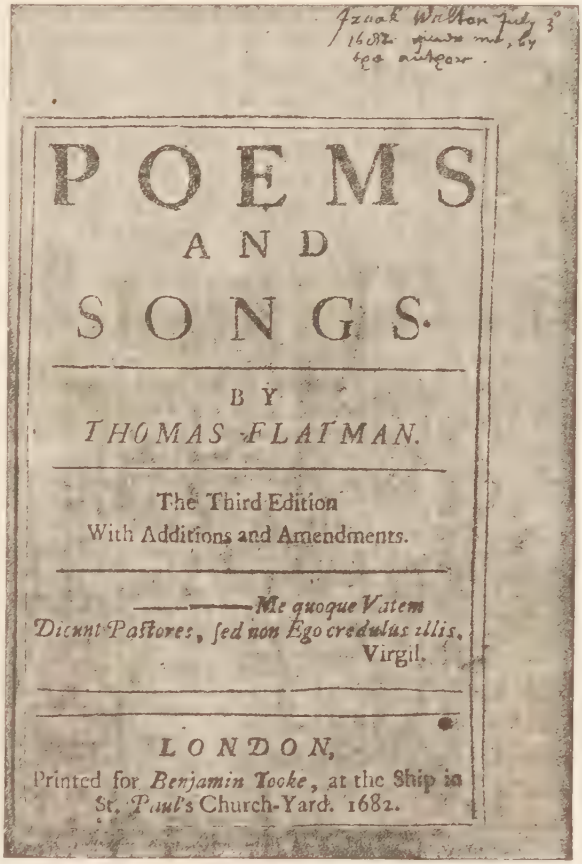
Simon Peter *said, I go a fishing: and they said, We also will go with thee.* John 21. 3.

London, Printed by T. Maxey for Rich. Marriot, in S. Dunstans Church-yard Fleet-street, 1653.

Title-page of Walton's "Compleat Angler," First Edition, 1653

FROM WALTON'S "LIFE OF MR. GEORGE HERBERT."

In a late retreat from the business of this world, and those many little cares with which I have too often cumbered myself, I fell into a contemplation of some of those historical passages that are recorded in Sacred Story: and more particularly of what had passed betwixt our blessed Saviour and that wonder of women, and sinners, and mourners, St. Mary Magdalen. I call her Saint, because I did not then, nor do now consider her, as when she was possessed with seven devils; nor as when her wanton eyes and dishevelled hair were designed and managed to charm and ensnare amorous beholders. But I did then, and do now consider her, as after she had expressed a visible and sacred sorrow for her sensualities; as after those eyes had wept such a flood of penitential tears as did wash, and that hair had wiped, and she most passionately kissed the feet of hers and our blessed Jesus. And I do now consider, that because she loved much, not only much was forgiven her: but that beside that blessed blessing of having her sins pardoned, and the joy of knowing her happy condition, she also had from him a testimony that her alabaster box of precious ointment poured on his head and feet, and that spikenard, and those spices that were by her dedicated to embalm and preserve his sacred body from putrefaction, should so far preserve her own memory, that these demonstrations of her sanctified love, and of her officious and generous gratitude, should be recorded and mentioned wheresoever his Gospel should be read; intending thereby, that as His, so her name, should also live to succeeding generations, even till time itself shall be no more.


Izaak Walton July 3d 1682 given me by the author.

POEMS
AND
SONGS.

BY
THOMAS FLATMAN.

The Third Edition
With Additions and Amendments.

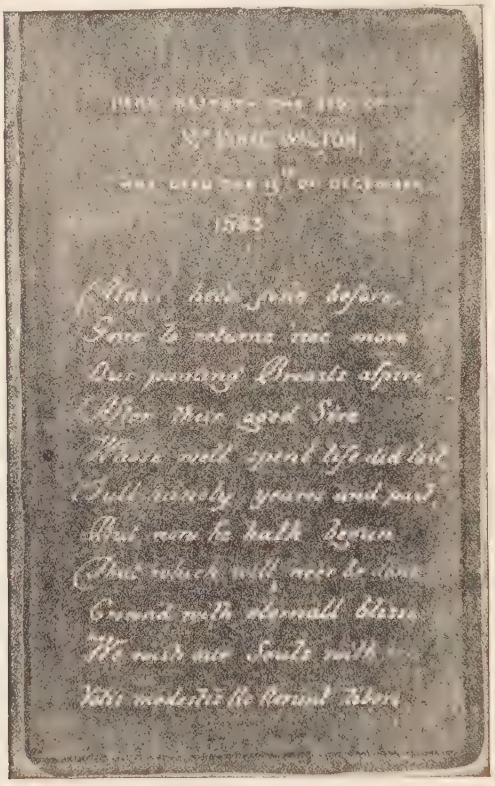
——Me quoque Vatem
Dicunt Pastores, sed non Ego credulus illis.
Virgil.

LONDON,
Printed for Benjamin Tooke, at the Ship in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1682.

Izaak Walton's Autograph on a Copy of Thomas Flatman's Poems

James Howell (1594?–1666), one of the fifteen children of Thomas Howell of Abernant, Carmarthenshire, was probably born in 1594 at Llangammarch in the county of Brecon. He was educated at the Free School of Hereford under "a learned but lashing master," and proceeded to Jesus College, Oxford, in 1610. He took his degree at the close of 1613, and long afterwards (1623) he was elected a fellow of his college. But although Howell was always a loving son of Oxford, he had few opportunities of residing there. At the age of twenty he was apprenticed *Howell*

to a glass manufacturer in Broad Street, London, and soon became steward or manager. He showed such a remarkable aptitude for business, that the firm sent him abroad to study the continental modes of making glass, and to secure the best materials. He was travelling, chiefly in Holland, Spain, and Italy, from 1616 to 1622, and having linguistic gifts, he became unusually skilled in the principal European languages; he says that he could talk seven tongues with fluency. His visit to England in 1622 was brief. He abandoned the glass business, in which he saw no opening for the future, and he adopted first a travelling tutorship, and then secretarial work as a profession; he was in Spain from 1622 to the end of 1624. Now, at the age of about thirty, he resolved to settle in England, and he entered the service first of the Duke of Buckingham, then (1626–28) of Lord Scrope. As Lord Wentworth's man, Howell entered the House of Commons, M.P. for Richmond in Yorkshire, in 1627. In 1632, he was taken to Denmark, as his private secretary, by the Earl of Leicester. For the next few years, Howell, driven from pillar to post, seems to have gained a precarious livelihood by clerical work. In 1640 he began his literary career by the publication of his political allegory, called *Dendrologia; or Dodona's Grove*, of which he published simultaneously a French translation; at this time he went over to Paris, and offered his services in vain to the Cardinal Richelieu. At length, in 1642, he became for a few months Clerk of the Council, but this apparent success was a disaster in disguise, for he attracted the unfavourable notice of Parliament, and in the course of the next year five armed men rushed, one morning, into his office with swords drawn and pistols cocked, and not merely arrested Howell, but confiscated all his MSS. and correspondence. A few days later he was thrown into the Fleet Prison, where he was left to languish for eight years. He was deep in debt, and "had now nothing to trust to but his pen." Howell, therefore, became perforce a professional man of letters, and contrived to support himself entirely by miscellaneous authorship. It was from prison that he began to publish his famous *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ*, or Familiar Letters, of which three volumes issued from the Fleet, in 1645, 1647, and 1650; a fourth followed in 1655. If, as we are to believe, Howell had been deprived of all his papers, those letters must have been compiled from memory; they were, however, accepted at the time as



The Tomb of Izaak Walton in Winchester Cathedral

It is humbly offered to the Consideration 370.
of
The Right Hon^ble the Council of State,

That, Whereas upon this Change of Government, & Revolution of Interest from Kingly Power to a Comon Wealth there may happen som question touching the primitive & Inalienable Right that Great Britain claymes to the Soveraignty of her own Seas as hath allready appeered by the late clash that broke out twixt us & Holland (which may well be sayed to be a Comon Wealth of Englands Creation) It were expedient, humbly under favor, that a new Treatise be compild for the vindication, and continuance of this Right notwithstanding this Change; And if the State be pleasd to impose so honorable a comand upon the Subscriber, He will employ his best abilities to perform it; In which Tretise not only all the learned Reasons & Authorities of Mr Selden shalbe produced, but the Truth of the Thing shalbe reinforced and asserted by further arguments, Examples, & Evidences: And it were requisit that the sayed Treatise shold go published in French, as well as English, French being the most comunicable language of Comerce among those Nations whom this knowledg herof doth most concern, & so may much availe to disperse the truth, & satisfie the World in this point

Jam Howell.

Petition of James Howell to the Council of State, offering to compose a fresh Treatise on Great Britain's Sovereignty of the Seas

genuine contributions to current history, and were read with extreme avidity. They marked the rise of a new class of literature in England, the elaborately-composed essay-letter, of which Balzac had set the type in France. When Howell emerged from prison, he devoted himself to the flattery of Cromwell, yet contrived to recover favour when the king came back. Charles II. created and amply endowed the post of Historiographer Royal for Howell in 1661, so that the close of his fugitive and harassed life was comfortable. He died early in November 1666, and was buried in the Temple Church. His miscellaneous and occasional effusions in prose and verse, and his translations, are extremely numerous; he was always hovering on the borders of what we now call journalism.

Title-page of James Howell's "Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ," with the Author's Portrait

In a long and curious letter, addressed to Lord Cliffe on the 7th of October 1634, Howell discusses at large the drinks of the world. In the course of it, he tells such stories as these :—

The countries that are freest from excess of drinking are Spain and Italy. If a woman can prove her husband to have been thrice drunk, by the ancient laws of Spain she may plead for a divorce from him. Nor, indeed, can the Spaniard, being hot-brained, bear much drink, yet I have heard that Gondamar was once too hard for the King of Denmark, when he was here in England. But the Spanish soldiers that have been in the wars of Flanders will take their cups freely, and the Italians also. When I lived t'other side the Alps, a gentleman told me a merry tale of a Ligurian soldier, who had got drunk in Genoa; and Prince Doria going a-horseback to walk the round one night, the soldier took his horse by the bridle, and asked what the price of him was, for he

wanted a horse. The Prince, seeing in what humour he was, caused him to be taken into a house and put to sleep. In the morning he sent for him, and asked him what he would give for his horse. "Sir," said the recovered soldier, "the merchant that would have bought him last night of your Highness went away betimes in the morning." . . . I have heard of a company of Low Dutchmen that had drunk so deep, that beginning to stagger, and their heads turning round, they thought verily that they were at sea, and that the upper chamber where they were was a ship, insomuch that, it being foul windy weather, they fell to throw the stools and other things out of the window, to lighten the vessel, for fear of suffering shipwreck.

Thomas Fuller (1608–1661) was the son of the Rev. Thomas Fuller, of Aldwinckle St. Peter's, in Northamptonshire, where he was baptized, June 19, 1608. He was taught at home, by his father, until June 1621, when he was sent up to Queen's College, Cambridge. He was disappointed of a fellowship at Queen's, and at Sidney Sussex, to which he migrated; and in 1630 he had to content himself with the perpetual curacy of St. Benet's, Cambridge. He presently secured other pieces of preferment, and from 1634 to 1641 he was rector of Broadwindsor in Dorset; but during all this time he did not wholly break off his connection with Cambridge. He married in 1638, and in 1639 published his first important book, *The History of the Holy War*. He was elected proctor to Convocation in the next year, and presently removed to London, where his wit in the pulpit became widely celebrated; he was elected lecturer to the Savoy Chapel. He was prominent in his loyalty, however, and with other royalist divines he was driven out of London in 1643; he took refuge in Oxford. He had recently published *The Holy State and the Profane State*, a treatise on the conduct of the Christian life, in five books; this is perhaps more densely crowded with the peculiar beauties of Fuller's style than any other work of his. Fuller was not very happy at Oxford, and early in 1644 he was glad

Fuller

Thomas Fuller

After an Engraving by David Loggan

to proceed to Exeter as chaplain to the Princess Henrietta, and when the queen fled, Fuller placed himself under the protection of Lord Montague at Boughton. During these uneasy years, he chiefly supported himself by the activity of his pen. In 1650 he brought out his picturesque geography of Palestine, called *A Pisgah-sight*, a folio richly illustrated; and in 1656 his most celebrated work, the huge *Church History of Britain*. This was greatly praised and widely read, but its accuracy was impugned by the historian, Dr. Peter Heylin (1600–1662). Fuller retorted in a very lively *Appeal of Injured Innocence*, in 1659. This was his last publication of importance. In 1660 Fuller went over to The Hague with Lord Berkeley to present himself to Charles II. At the king's return, he recovered his various ecclesiastical offices, and was looking forward to a bishopric, when he was attacked by typhoid fever. He insisted upon preaching on the 13th of August 1661, although he was so weak that he had to be lifted out of the pulpit, and three days later he died in his lodgings in Covent Garden. He was buried in the church of Cranford, of which he had been rector since 1658. His famous *History of the Worthies of England* appeared posthumously in 1662. He described this as an inventory of the rooms—that is to say shires—into which the "not very great house" of England is divided, with the portraits of great men hung on the walls of those rooms. Fuller was never held pre-eminent as a divine, and as an historian he was too rapid and careless to inspire confidence, but his wit and skill as a manipulator of language were unsurpassed. Nor should his extraordinary acquaintance with the face and form of England be neglected. "England was to him as an open book, whose leaves he was always turning over," and he was for ever riding hither and thither, in his geographical curiosity, till hardly a corner of the country was unknown to him.

FULLER ON HIS OWN VOICE.

Lord, my voice by nature is harsh and untunable, and it is vain to lavish any art to better it. Can my singing of psalms be pleasing to Thy ears, which is unpleasant to my own? Yet though I cannot chant with the nightingale, or chirp with the blackbird, I had rather chatter with the swallow, yea, rather croak with the raven, than be altogether silent. Hadst Thou given me a better voice, I would have praised Thee with a better voice. Now what my music wants in sweetness let it have in sense, singing praises with understanding. Yea, Lord, create in me a new heart (therein to make melody), and I will be contented with my old voice until in Thy due time, being admitted into the choir of heaven, I have another, more harmonious, bestowed upon me.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

Nunneries were good she-schools, wherein the girls and maids of the neighbourhood were taught to read and work; and sometimes a little Latin was taught them therein. Yea, give me leave to say, if such feminine foundations had still continued, provided no vow were obtruded upon them (virginity is least kept where it is most constrained), haply the weaker sex (beside the avoiding modern inconveniences) might be heightened to a higher perfection than hitherto hath been attained. The sharpness of their wits, and suddenness of their conceits, which their enemies must allow unto them, might by education be improved into a judicious solidity, and that adorned with arts, which now they want, not because they cannot learn, but are not taught them. I say, if such feminine foundations were extant now-of-days, haply some virgins of highest birth would be glad of such places; and, I am sure, their fathers and elder brothers would not be sorry for the same.

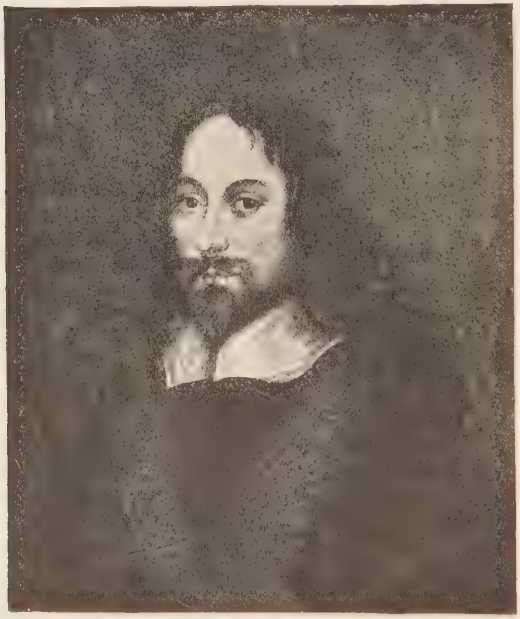
Browne

We have been speaking of prose-writers who were eager to liberate themselves from the shackles of the Renaissance. But in Sir THOMAS BROWNE

Title-page of Thomas Fuller's "Pisgah-Sight"

we meet with a man who hugged those fetters closer to himself, and turned them into chased and fretted ornaments of gold. He was one of those rare prose-writers whom we meet at intervals in the history of literature who leave nothing to improvisation, but balance and burnish their sentences until they reach a perfection analogous to that of very fine verse. Supported by his exquisite ear, Browne permits himself audacities, neologisms, abrupt transitions, which positively take away our breath. But while we watch him thus dancing on the tight-rope of style, we never see him fall; if he lets go his footing in one place, it is but to amaze us by his agility in leaping to another. His scheme has been supposed to be founded on that of Burton, and certainly Browne is no less captivated by the humours of melancholy. But if Burton is the greater favourite among students, Browne is the better artist and the more imaginative writer. There is, moreover, much more that is his own, in relation to parts adapted from the ancients, than in Burton. We find nothing of progress to chronicle in Browne, but so much of high, positive beauty that we do not class him in the procession of the writers of his time, but award him a place apart, as an author of solitary and intrinsic charm.

Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682), the philosophical physician of Norwich, was born in London on the 19th of October 1605. He was the son of a mercer of the same name, settled in the parish of St. Michael, Cheapside. He was admitted to a scholarship at Winchester on the 20th of August 1616, and was transferred to Broadgate Hall (Pembroke College), Oxford, in 1623. The incidents of Browne's early life are obscure, but it is believed that after taking his M.A. degree in June 1629, he immediately began the study of medicine. We hear of him in Ireland, at Montpellier, making the tour of Italy, and residing some time at Padua. He took his degree of M.D. at Leyden, about 1633. His life was "a restless pilgrimage" till 1634, when, tired of travel, he came back and settled in England, probably in London. In 1635 he wrote the first sketch of the *Religio Medici*. He was persuaded by Sir Nicholas Bacon and other influential people in Norfolk, to practise as a physician in Norwich, which he did in 1636, marrying in 1641 into one of the best county families, and remaining there for the rest of his life. In 1642, as a



Sir Thomas Browne

From an Engraving after the original in the Royal College of Physicians

March 28

Sr

I rcd his letter by capt Zulmon Carkeu
25s shillings. for I find him indebted for
some books into Mr Martyn Bookseller at
the Bell in S. Pauls church yard 24 or 25s
shillings. and when my Ray was to print
his own Ornithology or discription of birds I
lent him many drawings of ~~his~~ birds in colours
which I had caused at times to be drawn,
and boh the Catalogue & discription he intended
me but they should be carefully returned
but I have not since received them
but they are enclosed in Mr Martyns Card
Therefore pursuant my former note to Mr
Martyn and desire him from me to
deliver the same unto you and I shall
not be satisfied. pay him the 25s shillings
which I am now sending with my Respects & service
for I have always found him a very
civil honest person I rest

your loving father

Thomas Browne

Letter from Sir Thomas Browne

consequence of having been frequently handed about in MS., the *Religio Medici* appeared in a pirated edition, which led to its being published by the author in the course of the next year. Its success was overwhelming; "hardly ever was a book published in Britain that made more noise than the *Religio Medici*," says Oldys. It was translated into many languages, and as early as 1645 Patin tells us that it was in high credit in Paris; although it exposed Browne, among Catholics as well as Protestants, to a charge of atheism. Unmoved by the violent discussion which raged around this his first work, Browne devoted himself to an examination of popular errors in scientific observation, which he exposed in 1646, in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*. His life was now perfectly uneventful, devoted to his profession and to his studies. He did not appear before the public again until 1658, when he issued together his *Hydriotaphia* and *Garden of Cyrus*, in which the delicacy of his mannered prose reaches its extreme height. Although Browne sided with the Royalists during the Civil War, he does not appear to have been disturbed. He was an original member of the Royal Society, was made an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1663, and was knighted by Charles II. when he visited Norwich in September 1671. Browne was a profound student of natural phenomena, and he continued his investigations far into old age, dying on his seventy-seventh birthday, October 19, 1682. Archbishop Tenison edited Browne's *Miscellaneous Tracts* in 1684; his Works in folio appeared in 1686; and his son—Dr. Edward Browne (1642–1710), one of the most eminent physicians of his day, and devoted to his father's fame—published his beautiful *Letter to a Friend* in 1690. The *Christian Morals* did not appear until 1716. Sir Thomas Browne was buried in the church of St. Peter's, Mancroft, Norwich.

A true and full coppy of that which was most
unperfectly and Surreptitiously printed before
under the name of Religio Medici.
Printed for Andrew Crooke 1642.

Frontispiece to Sir Thomas Browne's "Religio Medici"

He "was of a moderate stature, of a brown complexion, and his hair of the same colour." In an age full of tragical vicissitudes, the career of Browne seems to have been uniformly fortunate. He was happy in a quiet and prosperous career, in a wife devoted to his interests, in ten children all remarkable for gifts and graces, in a reputation not less distinguished than that of any writer of his time. His modesty and sincerity made him a universal favourite; he had more friends in the world of letters and science than any other Englishman of his age; he corresponded with the learned world of Europe from Iceland to Naples. Sir Thomas Browne is one great example of the fact that it is not quite impossible for an illustrious author to be consistently humble, extremely beloved, and entirely happy.

From the "Pseudodoxia Epidemica."

The Glow-worm.

Wondrous things are promised from the glow-worm; thereof perpetual lights are pretended, and waters said to be distilled which afford a lustre in the night; and this is asserted by Cardan, Albertus, Gaudentinus, Mizaldus, and many more. But hereto we cannot with reason assent; for the light made by this animal, depends upon a living spirit, and seems by some vital irradiation to be actuated into this lustre. For when they are dead, they shine not, nor always while they live, but are obscure, or light, according to the diffusion of this spirit, and the protrusion of their luminous parts, as observation will instruct us. For this flammeous light is not over all the body, but only visible on the inward side; in a small white part near the tail. When this is full and seemeth protruded there ariseth a flame of a circular figure, and emerald-green colour; which is more discernible in any dark place than by day; but when it falleth and seemeth contracted, the light disappeareth, and the colour of that part only remaineth. Now this light, as it appeareth and disappeareth in their life, so doth it go quite out at their death. As we have observed in some, which, preserved in fresh grass, have lived and shined eighteen days; but as they declined, their light grew languid, and at last went out with their lives.

From "Cyrus's Garden."

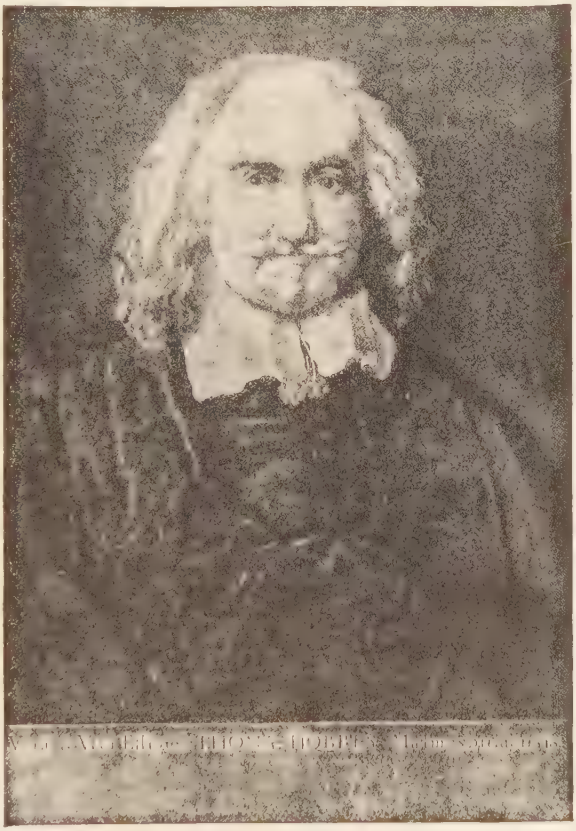
But the quincunx of heaven runs low, and 'tis time to close the five ports of knowledge: we are unwilling to spin out our awaking thoughts into phantasms of sleep, which often continueth precogitations, making cables of cobwebs, and wildernesses of handsome groves. Beside, Hippocrates hath spoke so little, and the oneirocritical masters have left such frigid interpretations from plants, that there is little encouragement to dream of paradise itself. Nor will the sweetest delight of gardens afford much comfort in sleep, wherein the dulness of that sense shakes hands with delectable odours; and, though in the bed of Cleopatra, can hardly with any delight raise up the ghost of a rose. Night, which pagan theology could make the daughter of Chaos, affords no advantage to the description of order; although no lower than that mass can we derive its genealogy. All things began in order, so shall they end, and so shall they begin again; according to the ordainer of order and mystical mathematics of the city of heaven.

Though Somnus, in Homer, be sent to rouse up Agamemnon, I find no such effects in these drowsy approaches of sleep. To keep our eyes open longer were but to act our Antipodes. The huntsmen are up in America, and they are already past their first sleep in Persia. But who can be drowsy at that hour which freed us from everlasting sleep? or have slumbering thoughts at that time when sleep itself must end, and, as some conjecture, all shall awake again?

Hobbes

A writer far less charming than Browne, and now completely obsolete for the ordinary reader, did serviceable work in clarifying and simplifying prose expression, and in preparing for the lucidity of the Restoration. Thomas Hobbes was the most brilliant pure intelligence between Bacon and Locke; but his metaphysical system is now known to have been independent of the former, and derived from French sources. His views are embodied in his *Leviathan*, a work of formidable extent, not now often referred to except by students, but attractive still from the resolute simplicity of the writer's style. In the next age, and especially when deism began to develop, Hobbes exercised a great influence, but this declined when Locke gained the public ear. Hobbes, however, is still read by all serious students of philosophy, at home and abroad.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) was the son of a clergyman of Westport, in Wiltshire. His mother being terrified by news of the approach of the Spanish Armada, the future philosopher was prematurely born on the 5th of April 1588. He was at school at Westport and at Malmesbury, and proceeded to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, with a good basis of Greek, in 1603. Hobbes was protected by an uncle, an alderman of Malmesbury, who helped to pay for his education, and who, when he died, left him an annuity "that he might not be obliged to desert his studies." Hobbes remained at Oxford until 1608, when he entered the service of Lord Hardwicke, afterwards first Earl of Devonshire, as tutor to his son William; he now remained in the family of the Cavendishes for twenty years, and, indeed, with short eclipses, for seventy years. In 1610 Hobbes accompanied William Cavendish on the Grand Tour. Very little is known of Hobbes for these early years, except that he was immersed in study, especially of Greek language and literature, and that he enjoyed the friendship of Bacon and of Ben Jonson. After the death of the second Earl of Devonshire, in 1628, Hobbes transferred himself to the service of Sir Gervaise Clinton, with whose son he travelled as tutor until 1631. It was then proposed to him by the Countess of Devonshire, that he should return to her household, as tutor to her young son, the third Earl, to whom Hobbes had dedicated his earliest work, his translation of Thucydides. He now devoted himself to mathematics and natural philosophy; he visited, in company with the young Earl, many of the first men of science in France and Italy, and particularly enjoyed the company of Galileo at Pisa. In 1637 Hobbes and his youthful patron returned to England, and took up their residence at Chatsworth. Hobbes' Latin poem on *The Wonders of the Peak* probably belongs to the year 1638. In the general disturbance which followed the meeting of the Long Parliament, Hobbes fled in the winter of 1640 to Paris, and became intimate with Descartes and Gassendi. In 1642, at the advanced age of fifty-four, Hobbes made his first important contribution to literature by printing, privately, in Latin, a fragment of his great philosophical work, *De Cive*, more completely published



Thomas Hobbes

After an Engraving by Hollar

in 1647. During his stay in Paris, from 1640 to 1651, Hobbes lived under the protection and in the service of another member of the Devonshire family, Sir Charles Cavendish. All these years he was digesting his system of philosophy, and at length, in 1651, he returned to London, carrying with him for publication his vast treatise, *Leviathan;* this attempted to prove that self-interest is the only settled principle of human conduct, and alone can lead to the wholesome conduct of a commonwealth.

Title-page of Thomas Hobbes' "De Cive," First Complete English Edition, 1647, with the Author's Portrait

He had formulated the same doctrine, less fully, in a treatise of *Human Nature* in 1650. The English clergy are said to have raised such a disturbance about this book, which was held to be subversive of religion, that Hobbes had to retire suddenly to his old patron at Chatsworth, which, with other country seats of the Earls of Devonshire, remained his headquarters for the remainder of his long life. He engaged in constant controversy on philosophical questions, being repeatedly accused of heresy and even of atheism, charges which in 1666 were actually brought before the notice of Parliament; the storm, however, blew over. After this, in spite of his heterodoxy, the celebrity of Hobbes became European; in 1668 he brought out a splendid collected edition of his Latin works in Amsterdam; and he was visited in 1669 by Cosimo de Medicis, Duke of Tuscany. His English opponents continued to attack what one of them gracefully calls "that most vain and waspish animal of Malmesbury," but Hobbes was undisturbed. When he had passed the age of eighty, he undertook to translate the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into English verse, a feat which he completed at the age of eighty-seven. His *Behemoth*, a history of the Civil War, which he had written and suppressed twelve years earlier, he published in 1679, and in the same year he issued his autobiography. The astounding old man, who was not well, insisted on not being left behind when his patron moved from Chatsworth to Hardwicke in the autumn of 1679. The journey, although he was carried on a

feather-bed, proved too fatiguing, and on the 4th of December he died at Hardwicke, in full possession of his mental faculties, although advanced in his ninety-second year. He was buried among the Cavendishes, who had been his life-long patrons, in the aisle of Hault Hucknell Church. The surliness of Hobbes was almost an affectation; it was a subject of general entertainment, and Charles II., who had a great liking for the blunt old philosopher, said of him, "He is a bear, against whom the churchmen play their young dogs in order to exercise them." At the same time, Hobbes was personally timid to a ludicrous degree, so that he would never consent to be left alone, lest somebody should suddenly attack him.

Title-page of Thomas Hobbes' "Leviathan," First Edition, 1652

From "Leviathan."

Nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of body and mind, as that there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind than another, yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man and man is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest either by machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himself.

And as to the faculties of the mind—setting aside the arts grounded upon words, and especially that skill of proceeding upon general and infallible rules, called science; which very few have, and but in few things; as being not a native faculty, born with us, nor attained (as prudence) while we look after somewhat else—I find yet a greater equality amongst men, than that of strength. For prudence is but experience; which equal time, equally bestowes on all men in those things they equally apply themselves unto. That which may perhaps make such equality incredible, is but a vain conceipt of one's own wisdom, which almost all men think they have in a greater degree, than the vulgar; that is, than all men but themselves, and a few others, whom by fame, or for concurring with themselves, they approve. For such is the nature of men, that however they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned; yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves: for they see their own wit at hand, but other men's at a distance. But this proveth rather that men are in that point equal, than unequal. For there is not ordinarily a greater sign of the equal distribution of anything, than that every man is contented with his share.

Decadence in Poetry

As the century slipped away, English poetry came more and more under the spell of a corrupted Petrarchism. The imitation of Petrarch, seen through Marino and Tasso, penetrated all the poetic systems of Western Europe. It involved us, in English, in a composite style, exquisite and pretentious, simple, at once, and affected. A complicated symbolism, such as Donne had inaugurated, came into almost universal fashion, and verse was decomposed by an excess of antithesis, of forced comparisons, of fantastic metaphors. We have seen that, in the hands of the dramatists, blank verse, no longer understood, offered a temptation to loose and languid writing. In lyric poetry the rhyme presented some resistance, but everything tended to be too fluid and lengthy. The poets indulged themselves in a luxurious vocabulary; like the Pléiade, a hundred years earlier, they yearned after such words as "ocymore, dyspotme, oligochronian." Similar defects had been seen in the Alexandrian poets of Greece, in Ausonius, in the followers of Tasso; they were at that moment rife in the French of the latest Ronsardists and in the Spanish of Gongora. These dolphin colours are constantly met with in dying literatures, and the English Renaissance was now at its last gasp.

Herrick

In the midst of these extravagancies, like Meleager winding his pure white violets into the gaudy garland of the late Greek euphuism, we find ROBERT HERRICK quietly arranging his *Hesperides*, a volume which contains some of the most delicious lyrics in the language. This strange book, so obscure in its own age, so lately rediscovered, is a vast confused collection of odes, songs, epithalamia, hymns, and epigrams tossed together into a superficial likeness to the collected poems of Martial, with whom (and not at all with Catullus) Herrick had a certain kinship. He was an isolated Devonshire clergyman, exiled, now that his youth was over, from all association with other men of letters, grumbling at his destiny, and disdaining his surroundings, while never negligent in observing them with the most exquisite fidelity. The level of Herrick's performance is very high when we consider the bulk of it. He contrives, almost more than any other poet, to fill his lyrics with the warmth of sunlight, the odour of flowers, the fecundity of orchard and harvest-field. This Christian cleric was a pagan in grain, and in his petulant, lascivious love-poems he brings the old rituals to the very lych-gate of his church and swings the thyrsus under the roof-tree of his parsonage. He writes of rustic ceremonies and rural sights with infinite gusto and freshness, bringing up before our eyes at every turn little brilliant pictures of the country life around him in Devonshire.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674) was the seventh child of a Leicestershire man, Nicholas Herrick, who was settled in London as a goldsmith in Wood Street, Cheapside. The poet was baptized at St. Vedast's Church in Foster Lane, on the 24th of August 1591. When he was an infant, his father died of the effects of a fall from a window; he appears to have committed suicide. Robert was apprenticed in 1607 to his uncle, Sir William Herrick, the king's jeweller. It has been guessed, on slender evidence, that he was before this at school at Westminster. In 1614, at the late age

of twenty-three, Herrick went up to St. John's College, Cambridge, as a fellow-commoner. From his University days, fourteen amusing letters have been preserved, in which he tries to wheedle money out of his uncle. He moved over to Trinity Hall, and took his degree of M.A. in 1620. When Herrick left Cambridge is not known, nor when he took orders. But in 1627 he was chaplain to the luckless Ile de Rhé Expedition, and in September 1629 the king presented him to the vicarage of Dean Prior, which he has made so famous. This cure was in a very pretty part of South Devon, under Dartmoor, but it was too far from London to suit the poet, who pined in his exile in the "loathèd West," for the joys of the Mermaid Tavern. He lived, undisturbed for nearly twenty years, a bachelor, in his remote vicarage. In spite of his petulance he loved the country life. He watched with infinite relish the morris dances, wakes, and quintels, the mummings and Twelfth Night revellings with wassail bowls, the dances round the maypole and the plucking of daffodils and daisies. His clerical establishment at Dean Prior seems to have consisted of Prudence Baldwin, his ancient maid, of a cock and hen, a goose, a tame lamb, a cat, a spaniel, and a pet pig, learned enough to drink out of a tankard. What part the celebrated Julia played is left to conjecture. In 1640 Herrick proposed to publish his poems, but it was not until 1648 that his wonderful collection of *Hesperides and Noble Numbers*, "works both human and divine," was brought out. This is Herrick's solitary book. In this same year he was ejected from his living and came up to London; how he contrived

Frontispiece to Robert Herrick's "Hesperides," with the Author's Portrait, Engraved by Marshall

to live is unknown, and the only other facts preserved about him are that he was restored to Dean Prior on the 24th of August 1662, and that he was buried there on the 15th of October 1674.

FROM THE "HESPERIDES."

Delight in Disorder.

A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction:
An erring lace which here and there
Enthrals the crimson stomacher:
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbons to flow confusedly:
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat:
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility:
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

TO ANTHEA.

Bid me to live, and I will live
Thy Protestant to be,
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay
To honour thy decree:
Or bid it languish quite away,
And 't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep
While I have eyes to see:
And, having none, yet I will keep
A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair
Under that cypress-tree:
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en death to die for thee.

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me:
And hast command of every part
To live and die for thee.

FROM "A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE."

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell;
And little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof;
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry;

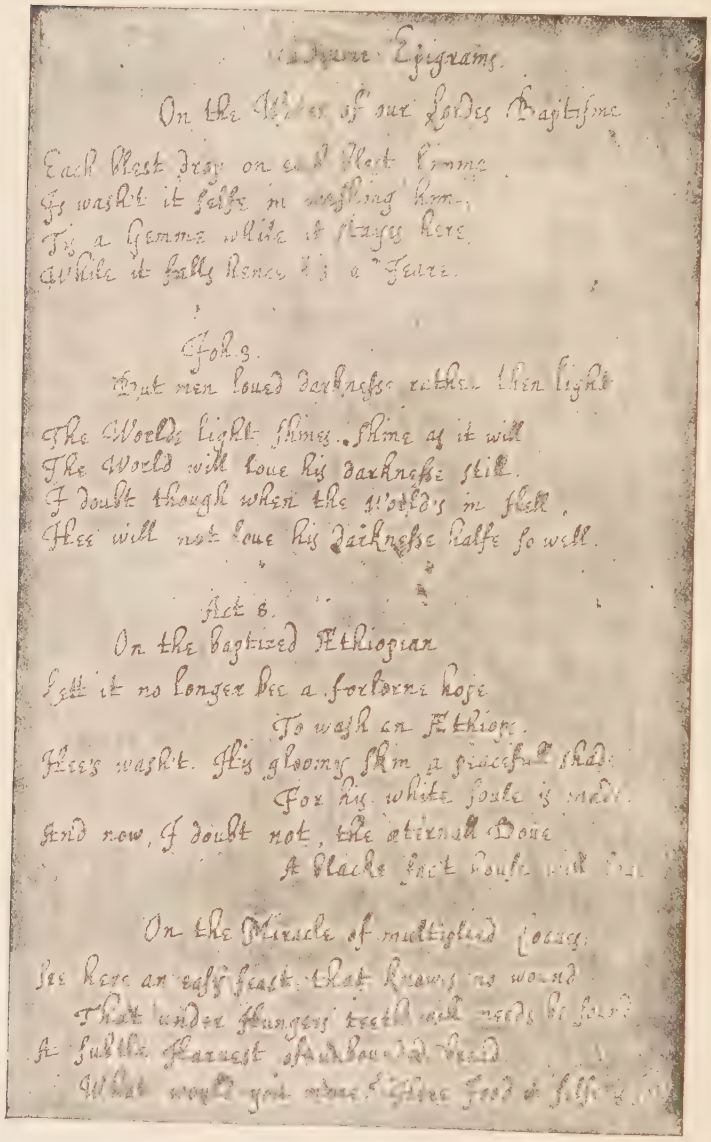
Where Thou my chamber for to ward
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me, while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state ;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come, and freely get
Good words or meat.
Like as my parlour, so my hall
And kitchen's small ;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unclipt, unflead.
Some little sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
. . . . . .

The Sacred Poets

Herrick is almost guiltless of the complicated extravagance which was rife when his single book appeared. Crashaw and Vaughan, on the contrary, were full of it, and yet they demand mention even in a superficial sketch of our poetry, for certain spiritual and literary qualities. RICHARD CRASHAW, a convert to Catholicism, who closed a hectic life prematurely in the service of the Holy House at Loretto, was a student of the Spanish and Italian mystics, and, in particular, we cannot doubt, of St. John of the Cross. His religious ecstasy and anguish take the most bewildering forms, sometimes plunging him into Gongorism of the worst description (he translated Marino and eclipsed him), but sometimes lifting him to transcendental heights of audacious, fiery lyricism not approached elsewhere in English. HENRY VAUGHAN was an Anglican mystic of quite another type, delicate, meditative, usually a little humdrum, but every now and then flashing out for a line or two into radiant intuitions admirably worded. In both there is much obscurity to be deplored ; but while we cultivate Crashaw for the flame below the smoke, we wait in Vaughan for the light within the cloud.

Crashaw

Richard Crashaw (1612? 1649) was the son of the Rev. William Crashaw, vicar of Whitechapel, a Puritan divine distinguished by his violent dread of Papal aggression. This clergyman, who was author among other things of *The Bespotted Jesuit*, died in 1626. The future poet, now an orphan, was educated in the Charterhouse, and in 1631 proceeded to Cambridge as a scholar of Pembroke Hall. He became a fellow of Peterhouse in 1637, and was ejected, as a Royalist and a high-churchman, in 1644. During his thirteen years at Cambridge, Crashaw entered with the warmest interest into all ecclesiastical affairs, though he never took priest's orders. After being driven out of Cambridge, he went to Oxford ; and presently, entered the Roman Catholic Church, to which he had long been leaning. When England was no longer safe for him, Crashaw fled to Paris, where, in 1646, he completed his *Steps to the*



Manuscript Poems by Crashaw

DIUINE EPIGRAMS.

ON THE WATER OF OUR LORDES BAPTISME.

Each blest drop on each blest limme,
Is wash't it selfe in washing him.
'Tis a Gemme while it stayes here,
While it falls hence 'tis a Teare.

Joh. 3.

BUT MEN LOUED DARKNESSE RATHER THEN LIGHT.

The Worlds light shines, shine as it will
The World will loue his darknesse still.
I doubt though when the World's in Hell,
Hee will not loue his darknesse halfe so well.

Act. 8.

ON THE BAPTIZED ÆTHIOPIAN.

Lett it no longer bee a forlorne hope
To wash an Æthiope.
Hee's wash't. His gloomy skin a peacefull shade
For his white soule is made.
And now, I doubt not, the æternall Doue
A blacke fac't house will loue.

ON THE MIRACLE OF MULTIPLIED LOAUES.

See here an easy feast that knowes no wound
That under Hunger's teeth will needs be sound.
A subtle Haruest of unbounded bread.
What would you more? Here food it selfe is fed.

Temple (sacred pieces) and *Delights of the Muses* (secular pieces) published that year in one volume. He suffered extreme poverty in Paris, but at the recommendation of Cowley, the queen gave Crashaw a letter of recommendation to Cardinal Pallotta, the Governor of Rome. Pallotta made the English poet his private secretary, perhaps in 1647. At first Crashaw was contented here, for the Cardinal treated him with great kindness. But the pure soul of the English mystic waxed hot within him as he became aware of the wickedness which went on in the very household of Pallotta, to whom at length he revealed what he discovered. The Cardinal, finding these accusations true, chastised the offenders, who thereupon threatened Crashaw's life. Pallotta, hoping to save him from being murdered, sent Crashaw to the sanctuary of Loretto, where he was appointed sub-canon of the church of Our Lady. He proceeded thither on the 24th of April 1649, but the malignity of his enemies pursued him, and a few weeks later he died, as was believed, by poison. In 1652 a fuller collection of Crashaw's poems, illustrated from his own designs, was issued in Paris. He is the one great Catholic mystic in the English literature of the seventeenth century, and in his genius and his mental proclivities strangely isolated among his fellows. Crashaw has left behind him some of the most splendid verses of the age; it is only fair to add that they are embedded in others of the most monstrous flatness and vapidity.

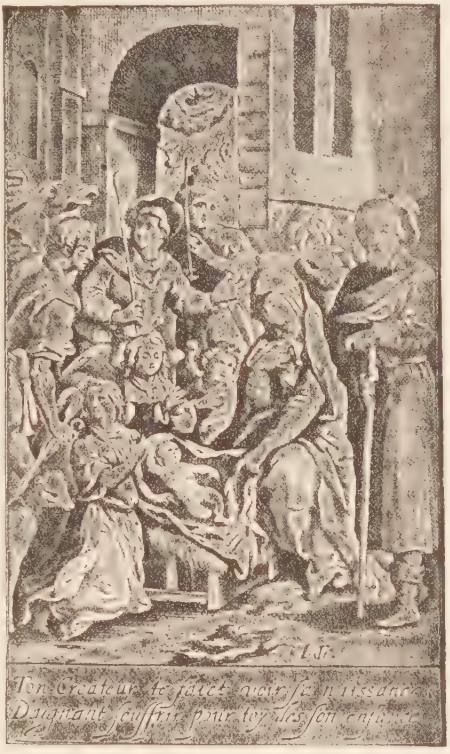


Illustration by Crashaw from the 1652 Edition of his Poems

From Crashaw's "Hymn to St. Teresa."

His is the dart must make the death,
Whose stroke will taste thy hallow'd breath;
A dart thrice dipp'd in that rich flame
Which writes thy spouse's radiant name
Upon the roof of heaven, where aye
It shines, and, with a sovereign ray,
Beats bright upon the burning faces
Of souls, which in that name's sweet graces
Find everlasting smiles. So rare,
So spiritual, pure and fair,
Must be the immortal instrument
Upon whose choice point shall be spent
A life so loved: and that there be
Fit executioners for thee,
The fairest first-born sons of fire,
Blest seraphim, shall leave their choir,
And turn love's soldiers, upon thee
To exercise their archery.

O, how oft shalt thou complain
Of a sweet and subtle pain!
Of intolerable joys!
Of a death, in which who dies
Loves his death, and dies again,
And would forever so be slain;
And lives and dies, and knows not why
To live, but that he still may die!
How kindly will thy gentle heart
Kiss the sweetly-killing dart!
And close in his embraces keep
Those delicious wounds, that weep
Balsam, to heal themselves with thus,
When these thy deaths, so numerous,
Shall all at once die into one,
And melt thy soul's sweet mansion;
Like a soft lump of incense, hasted
By too hot a fire, and wasted
Into perfuming clouds, so fast
Shalt thou exhale to heaven at last
In a resolving sigh, and then,—
O, what? Ask not the tongues of men.

Vaughan

Henry Vaughan (1622–1695), called "the Silurist," or inhabitant of South Wales, was born in the castle of Skethrog Tretower, in the parish of Llansaintfraed, in Brecknockshire, on the 17th of April 1622. In 1632 he and his twin-brother, Thomas (1622–1666), were sent to Llangattock to be taught by the rector, who gave them a sound classical foundation. From his charge they proceeded, in 1638, to Jesus College, Oxford. The Civil War disturbed the brothers, who returned to their native county—Thomas as rector of Llansaintfraed, Henry as a physician close beside him. Thomas was ejected from his living, and retired to Oxford, where he became the most famous alchemist of the day, and, under the pseudonym of Eugenius Philalethes, published some very curious books; he was a zealous Rosicrucian. Henry Vaughan published a volume of poems in 1646, and practised for many years as a doctor in the town of Brecon. His *Silex Scintillans* appeared in 1650, and his *Olor Iscanus* in 1651. Of the remainder of the life of Henry Vaughan little is known; some of his friends collected his later poems in a volume

Title-page of H. Vaughan's "Silex Scintillans"

called *Thalia Rediviva*, in 1678, but it is not supposed that, in shattered health and wholly given to piety, the poet took any interest in this publication. He went on living in his native county, and returned to the house where he was born, at Skethrog. Here he died on the 23rd of April 1695, entirely divorced from all mundane interests, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." He lies buried in the churchyard of Llansaintfraed.

THE RETREAT.

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy ought
But a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walk'd above
A mile or two, from my first love,
And looking back—at that short space—
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of Eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense,
A sev'ral sin to ev'ry sense,
But felt through all this fleshy dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.
O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I once more might reach that plain,
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence th' enlightened spirit sees
That shady city of palm trees.
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps will move;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

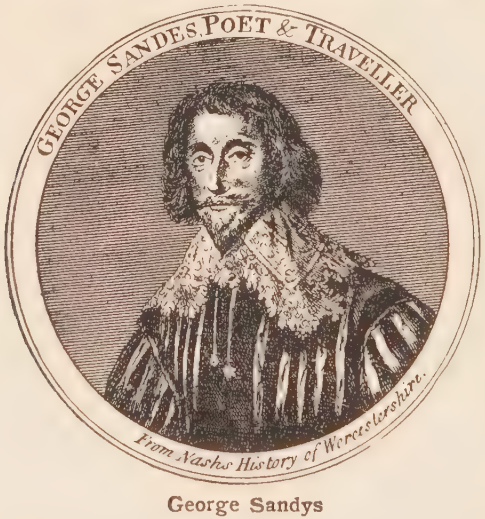
The Classical Reaction

Among the poets we have mentioned, and among the great majority of Commonwealth versifiers, there is to be traced no attempt to modify any further than Donne had essayed to do the prosody which had come into use with Spenser and Sidney. But it is now necessary to dwell on a phenomenon of paramount importance, the rise of a definite revolt against the current system of versification. Side by side with the general satisfaction in the loosely sinuous verse of the day, there was growing up a desire that prosody should be more serried, strenuous, neat, and "correct." Excess of licence led naturally to a reaction in favour of precision. It was felt

desirable to pay more attention to the interior harmony of verse, to avoid cacophony and what had been considered legitimate poetic licences, to preserve grammatical purity—in short, to sacrifice common sense and sound judgment a little less to fancy. Most obvious reform of all, it was determined to resist the languid flow of syllables from line to line, and to complete the sense as much as possible in a nervous couplet. It has been customary to consider this reform as needless and impertinent. I am of opinion, on the other hand, that it was not merely wholesome but inevitable, if English versification was to be preserved from final ruin. It was not until more than a century of severe and rigid verse-writing by rule had rehabilitated the worn-out instrument of metre that it became once more fitted to produce harmonies such as those of Coleridge and Shelley.

Writers of distichs

From high up in the seventeenth century careful students have detected a tendency towards the smoother and correcter, but tamer prosody. I do not think that the beginnings of the classical heroic couplet in England can be explored with advantage earlier than in the works of Sir John Beaumont, who, dying in 1627, left behind him a very carefully written historical poem of *Bosworth Field*. George Sandys, the translator, in the course of his extensive travels, seemed to have gained French ideas of what the stopped couplet should be. But when all claims and candidates have been considered, it is really to EDMUND WALLER that is due the "negative inspiration" (the phrase is borrowed from Saint-Beuve) of closing up within bands of smoothness and neatness the wild locks of the British muse. He was the English Malherbe, and wrote with the same constitutional contempt for his predecessors. Dryden accepted him as the forerunner of the classic school, and calls him "the first that made writing [verse] easily an art; first showed us how to conclude the sense most commonly in distichs." Waller appears to have accepted this reform definitely about 1627 (Malherbe's strictly parallel reform dates from 1599), and he persisted in it long without gaining a single scholar. But in 1642 Sir JOHN DENHAM joined him with his smooth, arid, and prosaic *Cooper's Hill*, and COWLEY and DAVENANT were presently converted. These four, then, poets of limited inspiration, are those who re-emerge in the next age as the harbingers of vigorous prosody and the forerunners of Dryden and Pope.



George Sandys

Sir John Beaumont (1583–1627), the elder brother of the dramatist, Francis Beaumont, and son of Francis Beaumont, of Grace Dieu, Justice of the Common Pleas, is believed to be the author of *The Metamorphosis of Tobacco* (1602); after his death in 1627 his son published his father's posthumous poems, and in particular *Bosworth Field* (1629). He was one of the very first to write in clearly finished couplets of heroic verse, and another writer for whom the same questionable merit has been claimed is **George Sandys** (1578–1644), the traveller, youngest son of Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York. He was born at Bishopsthorpe on the 2nd of March 1578, and was educated in Oxford. He started in 1610 upon an elaborate exploration of the East, of which he gave an account in a *Relation of a Journey*, published after his return in 1615. Sandys visited Turkey, Palestine, Egypt, and the remote parts of Italy. He enjoyed several appointments at court, and was lucky enough just to escape the troubles of the Civil War, dying at Boxley, in Kent, in 1644. He published a good deal in verse, his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1621–26) being his most successful enterprise in poetry. But he also paraphrased, in neat verses, large portions of Holy Scripture, and it is in these exercises that the peculiarities of his versification are met with.

TO THE BEST OF MEN,
AND
MOST EXCELLENT OF PRINCES,
CHARLES,
BY THE GRACE OF GOD KING
OF GREAT-BRITAINE, FRANCE,
AND IRELAND:
LORD OF THE FOVRE SEAS;
OF VIRGINIA, THE VAST TERRITORIES ADIOYNING, AND
DISPERSED ISLANDS OF THE
VVESTERNE OCEAN;
THE ZEALOVS DEFENDOR OF
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH:
GEORGE SANDYS,
THE HVMBLEST OF HIS SERVANTS,
PRESENTS AND CONSECRATES
THESE HIS PARAPHRASES VPON
THE DIVINE POEMS,
TO RECEIVE THEIR LIFE AND ESTIMATION FROM HIS FAVOVR.

Dedication to Charles I.

From Sandys's "Paraphrases upon the Divine Poems"

Edmund Waller (1606–1687) was born in the manor-house of Coleshill, Hertford (now Bucks), on the 3rd of March 1606. His father, Robert Waller, was a wealthy landed proprietor; he died in 1616. The poet's mother, a lady of much strength of character, sent him to Eton and to King's College, Cambridge (1620). It is believed that at the age of sixteen he was M.P. for Amersham; Clarendon tells us that Waller was "nursed in parliaments." He had certainly represented Ilchester, and then Chipping Wycombe, before he was twenty. His earliest poem, in the new style which he was to introduce, was probably written in 1623 or 1624. In 1631 Waller kidnapped a wealthy heiress from the City, and married her at St. Margaret's, Westminster; he was brought before the Star Chamber, but pardoned by the king. Mrs. Waller only lived until 1634. It is believed that it was soon after her death that Waller met his Sacharissa (Lady Dorothy Sidney, born 1617); he assailed her with an ardent suit, and many frigid verses, but she would not have him; and, marrying Lord Spencer in 1639, ultimately became Countess of Sunderland. In 1640 Waller entered the House again, as member for Amersham, in the Short Parliament, where he spoke prominently in a conciliatory spirit on Supply. In the Long Parliament, Waller sat for St. Ives; he gradually passed over from the party of Hampden (his kinsman) and Pym to that of Hyde and Falkland. Waller next posed as a champion of the king's prerogative; he spoke, Clarendon says, "on all occasions with great sharpness and free-

Waller

dom . . . against the sense and proceedings of the House." He was gradually betrayed into making a plot in the king's interest, the details of which enterprise are still obscure. But the conspiracy was discovered, and on the 31st of May 1643, Waller and his fellows were arrested. It is said that the poet, "confounded with fear and apprehension," gave information regarding all his accomplices, and even impugned several great ladies by name. Several of the smaller conspirators were executed; Waller was allowed to appear in deep mourning at the Bar of the House (July 4), and express his contrition. He was fined £10,000 and was banished, after having been imprisoned for nearly two years in the Tower. He married a second wife, and settled in France in 1645. In 1646 he was travelling in Italy, and later on he settled down at Rouen and then in Paris. In 1651 the House of Commons revoked his sentence of banishment, and in 1652 we find him at home again at Beaconsfield. In 1655 he sent his well-known *Panegyric* to Cromwell, but when the Restoration was imminent he published an elegy on Cromwell, and a poem of welcome to Charles II. At the king's jesting with him about this characteristic piece of inconsistency, and complaining that the poem to Cromwell was better than the poem to himself, Waller wittily replied, "Sir, we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as fiction." In 1661 Waller entered the House of Commons again, as M.P. for Hastings. His experience of parliamentary precedents was so much valued that for the rest of his life "it was no House if Waller was not there," although Burnet declares that he never laid the real business of the House to heart, "being a vain and empty, though witty man." He spoke, however, constantly in favour of mercy and toleration. He predicted the fate of James II., that "he would be left like a whale upon the strand." In his old age Waller met his Sacharissa again, as the Dowager Lady Sunderland. "When, I wonder," said she, "will you write

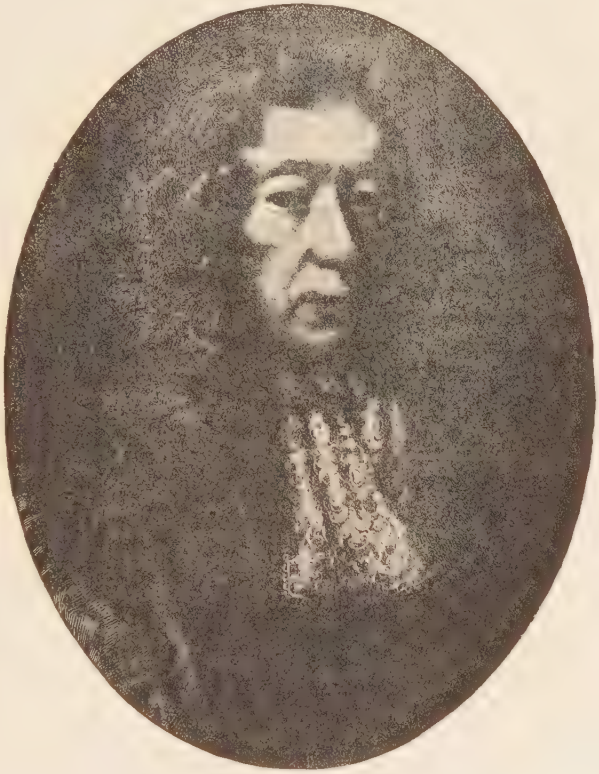
Edmund Waller

After the Portrait by Cornelis Janssen, at Farmington Lodge, North Leach

Lady Dorothy Sidney (Sacharissa)

After an original Portrait at Farmington Lodge, North Leach

such beautiful verses to me again!" "When, Madam," Waller replied, "your Ladyship is as young and handsome again!" He bought a small house at Coleshill, where he had been born, saying that "a stag, when he is hunted, and near spent, always returns home." But he died at Hall Barn, on the 21st of October 1687, and was buried in woollen in the churchyard of Beaconsfield. During his lifetime, Waller was held easily first among the poets of his time; the fact that he, although others may have written smooth distichs before him, was the real innovator in the revolution of English poetry, gave him a temporary pre-eminence. For readers of the present day the charm has evaporated from all but a few of his lyrics. Nothing, however, can prevent Waller from retaining great historic interest as a curious and characteristic product of the middle of the seventeenth century. He wrote verses at intervals from about 1622 to 1687, and is therefore an astonishing link between two great poetic ages.



Edmund Waller
After the Portrait by John Riley

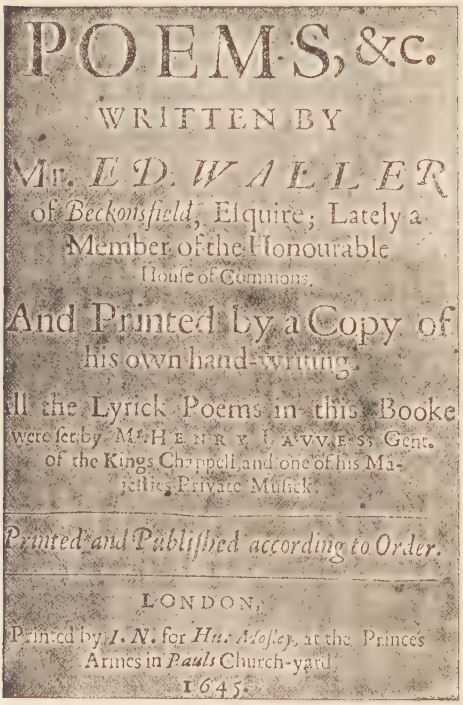
THE BUD.

Lately on yonder swelling bush
  Big with many a coming rose,
This early bud began to blush
  And did but half itself disclose;
I plucked it, though no better grown,
And now you see how full 'tis blown.

Still as I did the leaves inspire,
  With such a purple light they shone
As if they had been made of fire,
  And spreading so, would flame anon;
All that was meant by air or sun,
To the young flower my breath has done.

If our loose breath so much can do,
  What may the same informed of love,—
Of purest love and music too,—
  When Flavia it aspires to move?
When that which lifeless buds persuades
To wax more soft, her youth invades?

Waller's employment of the unbroken couplet, and his satisfaction at the result of his unsuccessful suit, are exemplified in *The Story of Phœbus and Daphne Applied*, which runs as follows:—


POEMS, &c.
WRITTEN BY
Mr. EDM. WALLER
of Beckonsfield, Esquire; Lately a Member of the Honourable House of Commons.
And Printed by a Copy of his own hand-writing.
All the Lyrick Poems in this Booke were set by Mr. HENRY LAWES, Gent. of the Kings Chappell, and one of his Majesties Private Musick.
Printed and Publisshed according to Order.
LONDON,
Printed by I. N. for Hu. Moseley, at the Princes Armes in Pauls Church-yard.
1645.

Title-page of Waller's Poems, First Edition

"Thyrsis, a youth of the inspirèd train,
Fair Sacharissa loved, but loved in vain.
Like Phœbus sung the no less amorous boy;
Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy!
With numbers he the flying nymph pursues,
With numbers such as Phœbus' self might use!
Such is the chase when Love and Fancy leads
O'er craggy mountains and through flowery meads;
Invoked to testify the lover's care,
Or form some image of his cruel fair.
Urged with his fury, like a wounded deer,
O'er these he fled, and now, approaching near,
Had reached the nymph with his harmonious lay,
Whom all his charms could not incline to stay.
Yet what he sung in his immortal strain,
Though unsuccessful, was not sung in vain;
All but the nymph that should redress his wrong,
Attend his passion and approve his song.
Like Phœbus thus, acquiring unsought praise,
He catched at love, and filled his arm with bays."

Davenant

Sir William Davenant (1606–1668) was baptized at Oxford on the 3rd of March 1606, as the son of John Davenant, the landlord of the Crown Inn. Shakespeare lodged here as he passed between Stratford and London, and it was early reported that William was Shakespeare's son. Davenant complacently encouraged this idea in later years. He was educated at the All Saints' Grammar School, Oxford, and when he was eleven years of age, at the death of Shakespeare, he wrote an ode on that event. In 1621 John Davenant was Mayor of Oxford, and it is the same year he and his wife died. William, who had entered Lincoln College, was removed to London, where he was attached to the service of the Duchess of Richmond as her page, and afterwards to that of the poet Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, with whom he was living when that peer was murdered by his valet, in 1628. In 1629 Davenant produced his first play, *Albovine*. He attracted the notice of the queen, and enjoyed a place at court. When Ben Jonson died, in 1637, Davenant succeeded him as Poet Laureate. Like other Royalists, he fell with the king's cause. In 1641, he was charged with complicity in a plot against Parliament, and fled; after being twice captured, he succeeded at last in escaping to France, where he joined the queen. But he made frequent clandestine visits to England in the royal interest, and during one of these Charles I. knighted him before the walls of Gloucester. After Marston Moor, Davenant retired finally to

France, and became a Roman Catholic. He was given rooms in the Louvre by Lord Jermyn, and here he settled down to the composition of his epic poem of *Gondibert*, two books of which he finished in January 1650. He then left France on a mission from the queen, but was captured and shut up in Cowes Castle. He was presently moved to the Tower, and would have been executed but, it is said, for the generous interposition of Milton. *Gondibert* was published in 1651. In 1656 Davenant began, very cautiously, to resume dramatic entertainments in London, and led public opinion on towards the foundation of a Restoration Theatre. When Charles II. returned, sentiment was ripe, and Sir William Davenant was granted a patent for a company of players (August 1660). He enjoyed a period of great theatrical prosperity, and brought out many plays by himself and other men. He died on the 7th of April 1668, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Davenant had a broken nose, an affliction which was not spared by the wits of his time.

Sir William Davenant

From an Engraving by Faithorne after Greenhill

SONG.

The lark now leaves his watery nest,
And climbing shakes his dewy wings
He takes your window for the east,
And to implore your light he sings,
Awake, awake, the morn will never rise,
Till she can dress her beauty at your eyes.

The merchant bows unto the seaman's star,
The ploughman from the sun his season takes;
But still the lover wonders what they are,
Who look for day before his mistress wakes:
Awake, awake, break through your veils of lawn!
Then draw your curtains and begin the dawn.

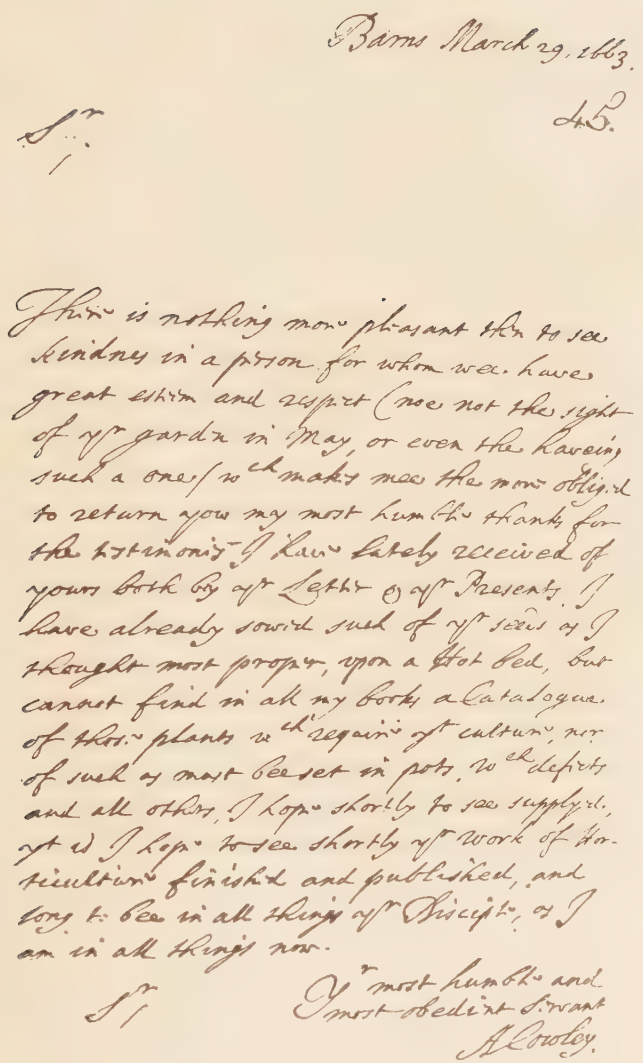
Abraham Cowley (1618–1667) was born late in 1618, in the parish of St. Michael le Quern, Cheapside; he was the posthumous son of Thomas Cowley, stationer, and his wife Thomasine. Mrs. Cowley was left substantially provided for. *Cowley*

Her youngest child entered Westminster School about 1628; here he showed a remarkable precocity. In his twelfth year he composed his little epical romance of *Constantia and Philetus;* in his fifteenth year he published his first collection of poems, *Poetical Blossoms.* He was much observed at school, as a boy certain to "increase the noble genius peculiar to that place." At sixteen he proceeded to Cambridge, being already famous, and was made a scholar of Trinity; a second edition of his poems, to which *Sylva* was added, having preceded him. Two plays—*Love's Riddle* and *Naufragium Joculare*—belong to 1637 and 1638, and before his twentieth year Cowley had "laid the design of divers of his most masculine works, which he finished long after."

Abraham Cowley
After the Portrait by Mrs. Mary Beale or Sir Peter Lely

In 1640 he was elected a fellow of Trinity. In 1641, when Prince Charles visited Cambridge, Cowley produced his comedy of *The Guardian.* The breaking out of the Civil War proved a crisis in the brilliant scholastic and literary career of Cowley. Not greatly interested in political questions, he had yet to choose a part, and he threw in his lot with the king's party. In his satire of *The Puritan and the Papist,* printed in 1643, he had burned his ships, and he was ejected from his University appointments, "torn," as he says, "from Cambridge, by that violent public storm which would suffer nothing to stand where it did." He was thrown "into the court of one of the best princesses in the world," Queen Henrietta. He settled in Oxford, but after the battle of Marston Moor, he fled to Paris with, or after, the queen. The next twelve years were "wholly spent either in bearing a share in the distresses of the royal family,

Abraham Cowley
After an Engraving by Vertue



Barns March 29. 1663.

Sr

45.

There is nothing more pleasant than to see kindnes in a person for whom wee have great esteem and respect (noe not the sight of yr garden in May, or even the haveing such a one) wch maks me the more obliged to return you my most humble thanks for the testimonies I have lately received of yours both by yr Letter and yr Presents. I have already sowed such of yr seeds as I thought most proper, upon a Hot bed, but cannot find in all my books a Catalogue of those plants wch require yt culture nor of such as must bee set in pots, wch defects and all others I hope shortly to see supplyd, yt as I hope to see shortly yr work of Horticulture finished and published, and long to bee in all things yr Disciple, as I am in all things now.

Sr

Yr most humble and
most obedient servant
A. Cowley.

Letter from Cowley to John Evelyn

Sr

BARNS, March 29, 1663

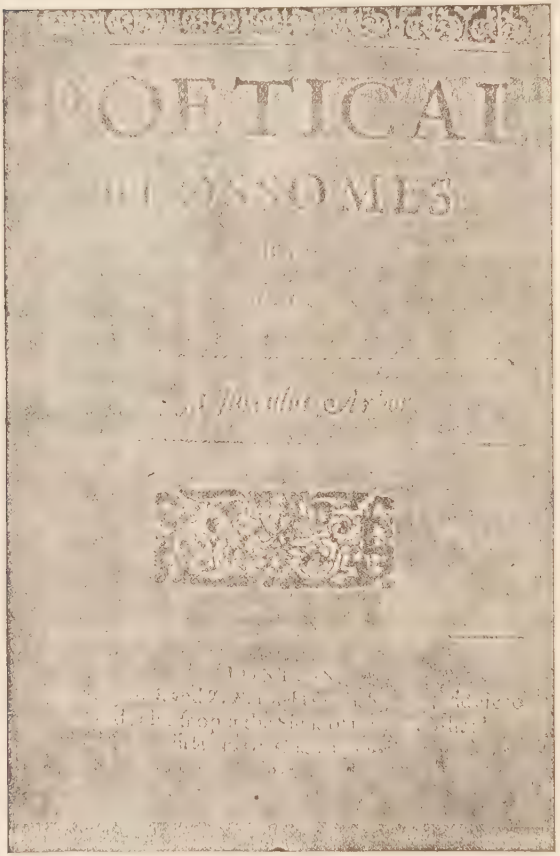
There is nothing more pleasant than to see kindnes in a person for whom wee have great esteem and respect (noe not the sight of yr garden in May, or even the haveing such a one) wch maks me the more obliged to return you my most humble thanks for the testimonies I have lately received of yours both by yr Letter and yr Presents. I have already sowed such of yr seeds as I thought most proper, upon a Hot bed, but cannot find in all my books a Catalogue of those plants wch require yt culture nor of such as must bee set in pots, wch defects and all others I hope shortly to see supplyd, yt as I hope to see shortly yr work of Horticulture finished and published, and long to bee in all things yr Disciple, as I am in all things now.

Sr

Yr most humble and
most obedient servant

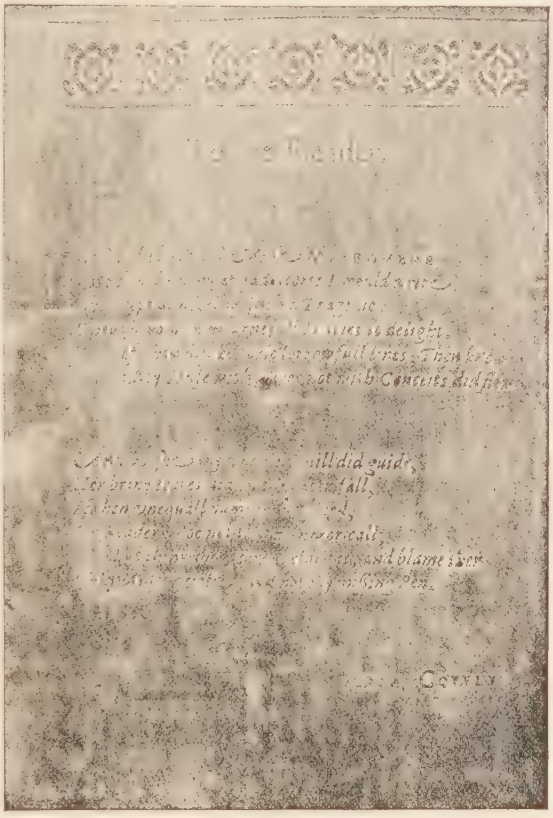
A. Cowley.

or in labouring in their affairs." Cowley made dangerous journeys, on the king's business, into Jersey, Scotland, Flanders, Holland, and elsewhere. The private correspondence between the king and queen was entrusted to his discretion. In 1656 he could endure exile no longer, and came over to London; he was arrested, and for some time closely imprisoned. On being released, Cowley returned to the practice of literature. In 1647 had been published, in his absence, his famous and long-admired miscellany of lyrics, *The Mistress;* he found himself, ten years later, the most popular living English poet. In order to conceal his political intentions, Cowley went to Oxford and there took the degree of M.D., pretending that he was about to practise as a physician; and he even wrote a poetical treatise *Plantarum.* In 1656 he published the folio of his Works, in which first appeared his sacred epic, the *Davideis*, and his celebrated *Pindaric Odes*, in which Cowley introduced into the garden of English literature a coarse metrical weed which throve apace for the next half-century. At the death of Cromwell, Cowley returned to France, and stayed there till the Restoration, when he published an *Ode.* He was one of the original members of the Royal Society. In 1661 he published two prose works, *The Advancement of Experimental Philosophy* and *A Discourse Concerning the Government of Oliver Cromwell.* A supplementary volume of his poems appeared in 1663. Charles II. behaved to Cowley with striking ingratitude; for all his self-sacrifice and his long laborious services the poet received no reward. The Mastership of the Savoy had been promised him, but it was given to a brother of one of the king's mistresses. Cowley took his cue; he retired instantly and conclusively from public life and from the agitations of a court; he was "weary of the vexations and formalities of an active condition." He was saved by the bounty of two old friends—Lord St. Albans and the Duke of Buckingham—from anything like penury, and he bought an agricultural estate on the Thames at Chertsey. "Con-



Title-page of Abraham Cowley's Poetical Blossoms

cealed in his beloved obscurity," he tried to farm his own land; he seems to have been unlucky in the enterprise. One summer evening in 1667, he stayed out in his fields, superintending his haymakers, too late, and became soaked with the dew. He caught a severe cold, of which he died on the 28th of July. Charles II., in tardy recognition, exclaimed, "Mr. Cowley has not left behind him a better man in England!" He was buried by the side of Chaucer and Spenser in Westminster Abbey. Cowley was a very honest man, beloved by his friends, faultless in his public and private conduct; he was consumed, as few men have been, by the burning ambition for a sound literary reputation. If his life had not been broken into and ravaged by political events which destroyed all his leisure through the best years of his youth, Cowley would probably have made very substantial contributions to literature. His *Essays* (published in 1668) proved his rare command of simple prose. But the root of the matter was not quite in him, and it is doubtful whether we have lost much by the enforced disturbance of his plans.



Dedicatory Verses to Cowley's Poetical Blossoms

FROM "ON THE DEATH OF MR. CRASHAW."

Pardon, my mother church, if I consent
That angels led him when from thee he went,
For even in error sure no danger is,
When join'd with so much piety as his.
Ah, mighty God, with shame I speak't and grief,
Ah, that our greatest faults were in belief!
And our weak reason were even weaker yet,
Rather than thus our wills too strong for it.
His faith perhaps in some nice tenets might
Be wrong; his life, I'm sure, was in the right;
And I myself a Catholic will be,
So far at least, great saint, to pray to thee!
Hail, bard triumphant! and some care bestow
On us, the poets militant below!
Opposed by our old enemy, adverse chance,
Attacked by envy, and by ignorance,

Enchain'd by beauty, tortured by desires,
Expos'd by tyrant-love to savage beasts and fires.
Thou from low earth in nobler flames didst rise,
And like Elijah, mount alive the skies.
Elisha-like (but with a wish much less,
More fit thy greatness, and my littleness)
Lo, here I beg (I whom thou once didst prove
So humble to esteem, so good to love)
Not that thy spirit might on me doubled be,
I ask but half thy mighty spirit for me ;
And when my muse soars with so strong a wing,
'Twill learn of things divine, and first of thee to sing.

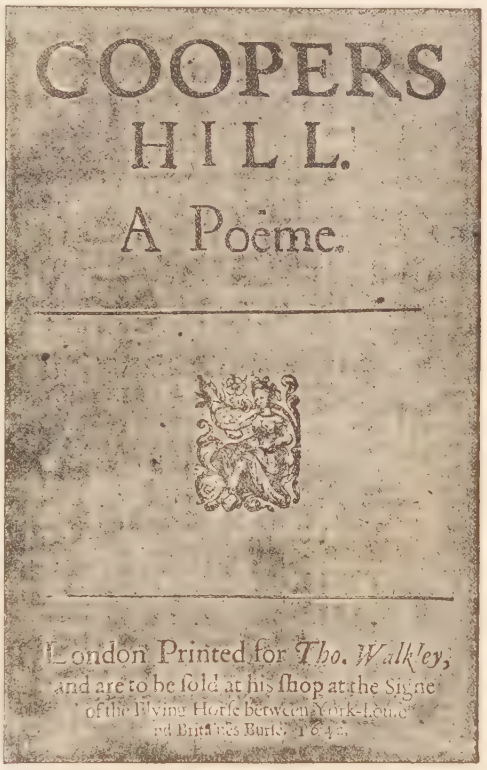
Sir John Denham (1615–1669), son of a knight of the same name, of Little Horsely, in Essex, was born in 1615, in Dublin, while his father was Chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland. The Denhams came over to England in 1617, the father receiving a high judicial appointment, and the future poet was put to a London grammar school. In 1631 he entered Trinity College, Oxford, as a gentleman-commoner; he was now "a slow, dreaming young man, more addicted to gaming than study." Denham entered at Lincoln's Inn, married in 1634, and was called to the Bar in 1638; in which year his father died, and left him a fortune, a great part of which he dissipated in gambling. He was high sheriff of Surrey and governor of Farnham Castle when the Civil War broke out, and he took the Royalist side. Having given no evidence of a turn for poetry, he "broke out like the Irish Rebellion, three score thousand strong, when nobody was aware or in the least suspected it," as Waller said, by publishing in 1642 his tragedy of *The Sophy* and his famous topographical poem *Cooper's Hill*, both anonymous. It was on these works, and on these alone, that his great reputation was so long sustained. Denham retired to Oxford to the king, and he was engaged in personal attendance on various members of the royal family until 1652. In 1650 he took the perilous journey to Poland, and brought back £10,000 for Charles II. from his Scotch subjects there. Early in 1652 Denham came back to London, but, his estates having been confiscated, he was glad to accept the hospitality of the Earl of Pembroke at Wilton, and lived very quietly until the Restoration. When the king came back, Denham was made surveyor-general of His Majesty's Buildings, and was knighted at the Coronation. He appears to have become for a while insane, after a second marriage. Lady Denham died in January 1667, and her husband recovered his mental health, but not

Sir John Denham
From an old Engraving

his spirits, and died in his office at Whitehall in March 1669. He was buried, close to Chaucer, Spenser, and Cowley, in Poets' Corner. No other publication of Denham's needs be mentioned here; he lives, if he lives at all, in *The Sophy* and in *Cooper's Hill*. It is in the latter that the famous lines occur which have so often and so effectively been quoted and parodied:—

"O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong, without rage; without o'erflowing, full."

These justly celebrated lines cannot, however, have aided in the original popularity of the poem, since they are not found in the early editions of it; it is believed that they occur for the first time in the sixth impression (1655) of *Cooper's Hill*. Sir John Denham collected his poems just before his death, in 1668.


COOPERS
HILL.
A Poeme.
London Printed for *Tho. Walkley*,
and are to be sold at his shop at the Signe
of the Flying Horse between Yorke-House
and Britaines Burse. 1642.

Title-page of Sir John Denham's "Cooper's Hill," First Edition, 1642

It is in verse that we can study, far more easily than in prose, the crisis in English literature which we have now reached. That there is a distinction between the manner of Wilkins and of Tillotson, for instance, can be maintained and proved, yet to insist upon it might easily lead to exaggeration. But no one with an ear or an eye can fail to perceive the difference between Herrick and Denham; it cannot be too strongly affirmed; it is external as well as intrinsic, it is a distinction of form as well as essence. Denham, to put it otherwise, does not very essentially differ as a versifier from such a poet as Falconer, who lived one hundred and twenty years later. But between him and his exact contemporary Crashaw a great gulf is fixed; they stand on opposite platforms of form, of sentiment, of aim. In the years immediately preceding the Commonwealth, literature fell very low in England. But we must not forget that it was a composite age, an age of variegated experiments and highly coloured attempts. One of these deserves a certain prominence, more for what it led to than what it was.

So long as the drama reigned among us, prose fiction was not likely to flourish, for the novel is a play, with all the scenery and the scene-shifting added, written for people who do not go to the theatre. But Sidney's example was still occasionally followed, and in the middle of the seventeenth

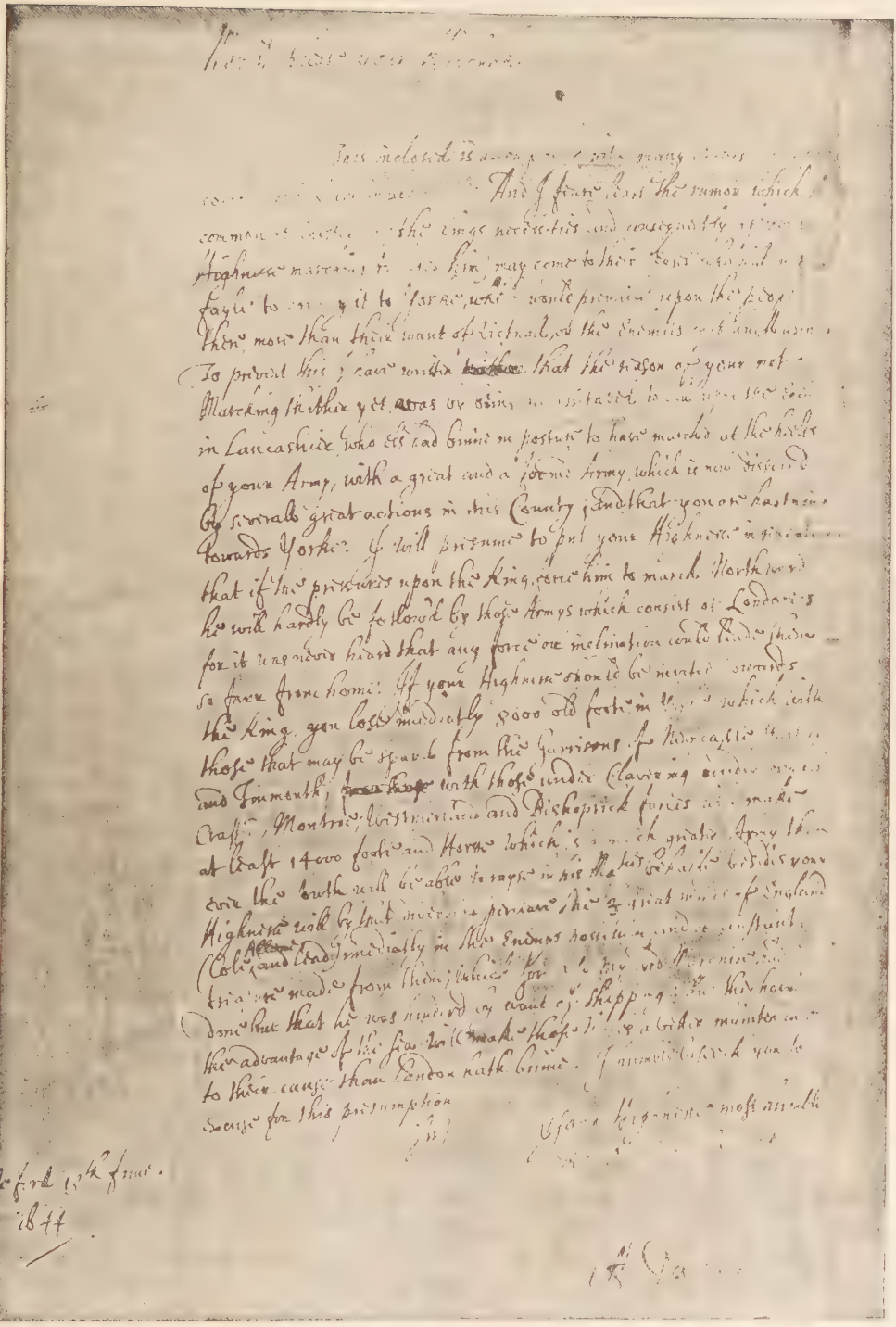
Novels

century the huge romances of the French began to be imported into England and imitated. The size of the originals may be gathered when it is said that one of the most popular, the *Cléopâtre* of Calprenède, is in twenty-three tomes, each containing as much as a volume of a Mudie novel. The English translations began to be very numerous after 1650, a version of the *Grand Cyrus*, in nearly 7000 pages, enjoying an immense success in 1653. It is difficult to speak of these pompous, chivalric romances without ridiculing them. A sketch of the plot of one reads like a burlesque. The original works of the English imitators of these colossal novels are of inferior merit to the original products of the Rambouillet school; the unfinished *Parthenissa*, composed in "handsome language" by Lord Orrery in 1654, is the best known of the former. The great vogue of these romances of chivalry was from 1650 to 1670, after which they were more or less merged in the "heroic" plays in rhymed verse which Dryden made popular. Their principal addition to literature was an attempt to analyse and reproduce the rapid emotional changes in the temperament of men and women, thus vaguely and blindly preparing the way for the modern realistic novel of psychology, and, more directly, for the works of Richardson. They formed the main secular reading of English women during the final decade preceding the Restoration, and in their lumbering diffuseness and slackness they exemplify, to an almost distressing degree, the main errors into which, notwithstanding the genius of one or two individuals, and the high ambition of many others, English literature had sunken.

Between 1645 and 1660 the practice of literature laboured under extraordinary disabilities. First among these was the concentration of public interest on political and religious questions; secondly, there was the suspicion and enmity fostered between men, who would otherwise have been *confrères*, by these difficulties in religion and politics; thirdly, there was the languor consequent on the too prolonged cultivation of one field with the same methods. It seems paradoxical to say of an age that produced the early verse of Milton and the prose of Browne and Jeremy Taylor, that it was far gone in decadence; but these splendid and illuminating exceptions do not prevent the statement from being a correct one. England needed, not a few beacons over a waste of the waters of ineptitude, but a firm basis of dry land on which to build a practicable style for daily service; and to get this the waters had to be drained away, and the beautiful beacons extinguished, by the cataclysm of the Restoration.

Milton

Before we consider, however, whither that revolution was to whirl the literature of this country, we must deal again with a stationary figure which belonged neither to the bankrupt past nor to the flushed and animated future. During twenty years Milton, but for an occasional sonnet, had said farewell to poetry. Not that the power had left him, not that the desire and intention of excelling in verse had passed away, but because other aspects of life interested him more, and because the exact form his great song should ultimately take had not impressed itself upon him. Milton permitted youth



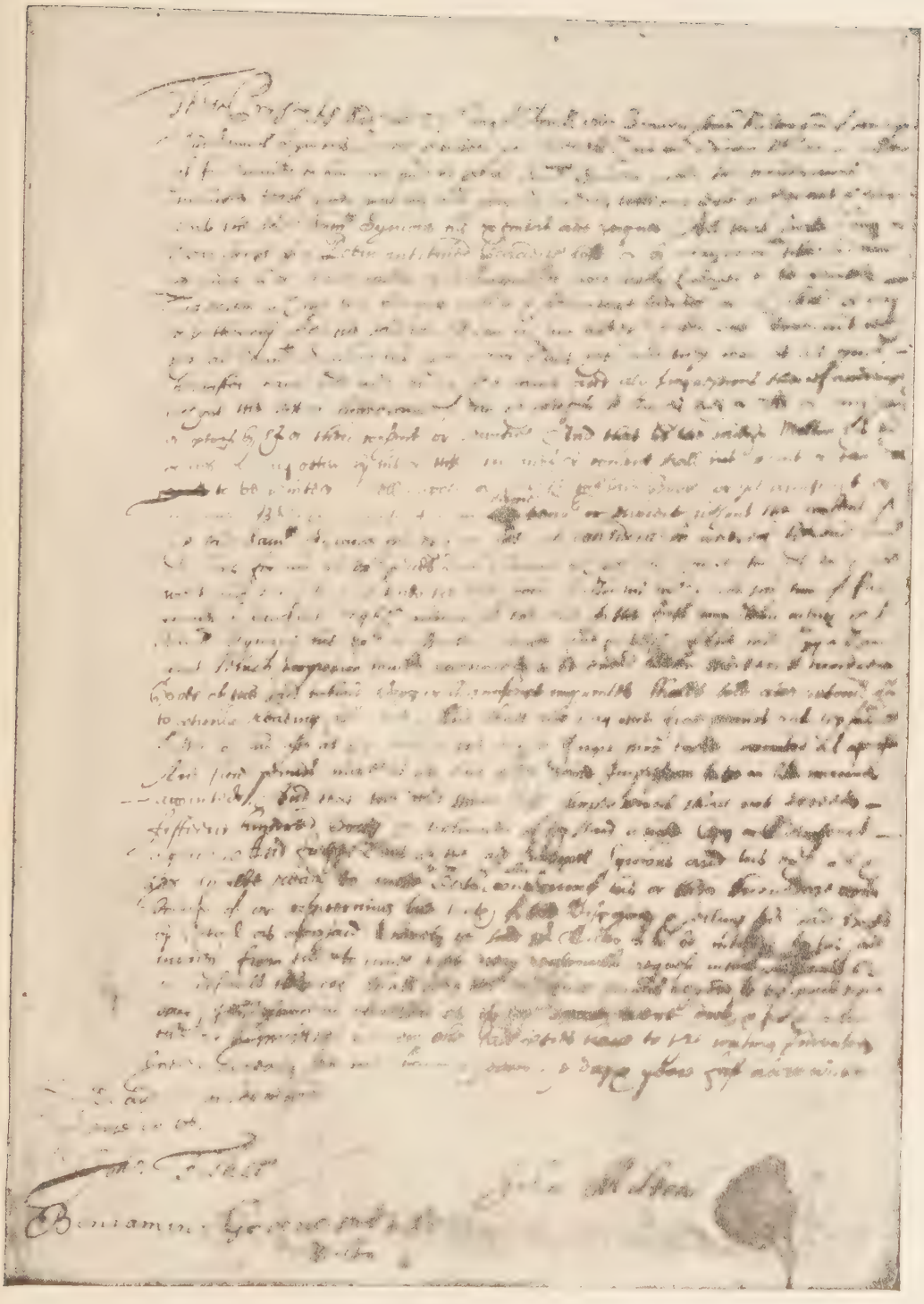
Letter from Sir William Davenant to Prince Rupert on the March of the King's Army Northward

and middle age to pass, and remained obstinately silent. The Restoration caught him at his studies, and exposed him suddenly to acute personal danger. Towards merely political opponents Charles II. could afford to show himself lenient, and in politics there is no evidence that Milton had ever been influential. It is customary to think that Milton's official position laid him open to resentment, but in the day of its triumph the Monarchy could disdain an old paid servant of the Parliament, an emeritus-Secretary for Foreign Tongues to the Council. What it could less easily overlook was the author of *Eikonoklastes*, that rabid pamphlet in which not only the tenure of kings was savagely railed at, but the now sacred image of the martyred Charles I. was covered with ignominious ridicule. Milton's position was not that of Dryden, or of Waller, who had eulogised Cromwell, and could now bow lower still to praise the king. He stood openly confessed as one of the most violent of spiritual regicides.

We might easily have lost our epic supremacy on the scaffold in August 1660, when the poet was placed so ominously in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. It seems probable that, to combine two legends, Davenant interceded with Morice on his behalf, and so helpless a rebel was contemptuously forgiven. We find him discharged in December 1660; and when the physical agitations of these first months had passed away, we conceive the blind man settling down in peace to his majestic task. His vein, his nephew, Edward Phillips, tells us, flowed only from the autumnal to the vernal equinox, and in the spring of 1661 the noblest single monument of English poetry doubtless began to take definite form. "Blind, old, and lonely," as in Shelley's vision of him, he was driven from prosperity and ease by the triumph of the liberticide, only that he might in that crisis become, what else he might have failed to be, "the sire of an immortal strain," "the third among the sons of light."

There is reason to believe that Milton had already determined what should be the form and character of his *Paradise Lost* when Cromwell died. In 1663 he completed the poem. Two years later, at Elwood's suggestion, "What hast thou to say of Paradise found?" he began the second and the shorter work, which he finished about 1665. The choral tragedy of *Samson Agonistes* followed, perhaps in 1667, which was the year of the publication of *Paradise Lost*; *Paradise Regained* and *Samson* were printed together in 1671. Three years later Milton died, having, so far as is known, refrained from the exercise of verse during the last seven years of his life. It was, we may believe, practically between 1661 and 1667 that he built up the gorgeous triple structure on which his fame as that of the first among modern heroic poets is perennially sustained. The performances of Milton are surprising, yet his reticences are almost more amazing still. He sang, when the inspiration was on him, "with impetus and *æstro*," and when the fit was off, could remain absolutely silent for years and years.

The Milton of the Restoration has little affinity with the lyrical Milton whose work detained us in the early pages of this chapter. He appears before



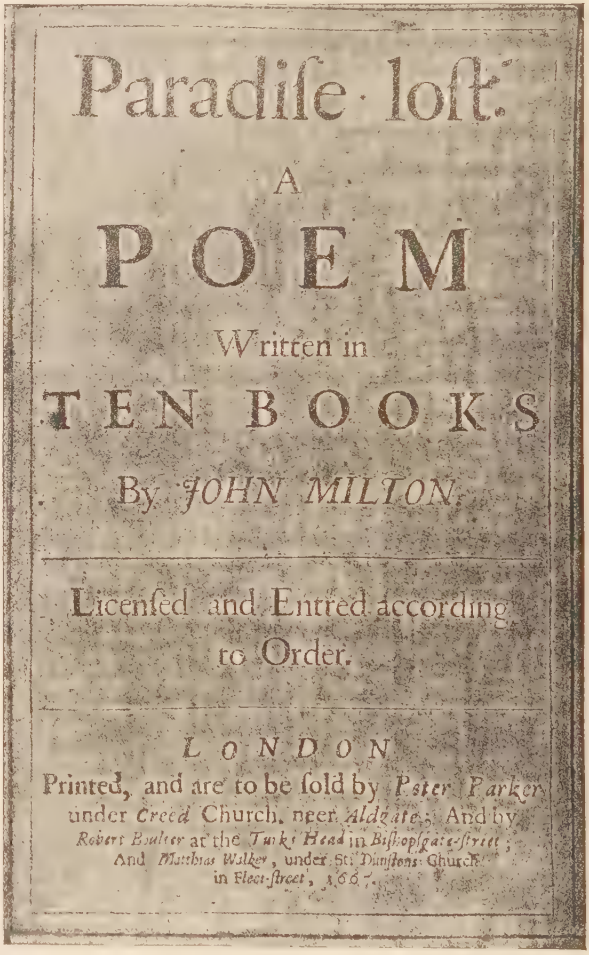
Facsimile MS. Agreement for "Paradise Lost"

us now solely in the aspect of an epic poet (for the very choruses in *Samson* are scarcely lyrical). He is discovered in these austere and magnificent productions, but particularly in *Paradise Lost*, as the foremost, and even in a broad sense the only epic poet of England. The true epos of the ancient literatures had detailed in heroic sequence the achievements of the national hero, supported and roused and regulated by the immediate intervention of the national deities. It had been notable for its elevation, its simplicity, its oneness of purpose. The various attempts to write literary epics in England before Milton's time had failed, as they have failed since, and his only models were the *Iliad* and the *Æneid;* although it is not to be questioned that his conscious design was to do for his own country what Tasso, Ariosto, and Camoens, glories of the Latin race in the sixteenth century, had done for theirs. Those poets had forced the sentiments and aspirations of a modern age into the archaic shape of the epos, and had produced works which did not much resemble, indeed, the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, but which glorified Italian or Portuguese prowess, flattered the national idiosyncrasy, and preserved the traditional extent and something of the traditional form of the ancient epics.

There was, however, another great predecessor to whom, in the general tenor of his epic, Milton stood in closer relation than to the ancients or to the secular moderns. The one human production which we occasionally think of in reading *Paradise Lost* is the *Divine Comedy*. In Milton, as in Dante, it is not the prowess of any national hero which gives the poem its central interest, but the sovereign providence of God. Dante, however, was emboldened, by the circumstances of his epoch and career, to centre the interest of his great trilogy in present times, giving, indeed, to a theme in essence highly imaginative, and as we should say fabulous, an air of actuality and realism. Milton touches modern existence nowhere, but is sustained throughout on a vision of stupendous supernatural action far away in the past, before and during the very dawn of humanity. Such a story as *Paradise Lost* communicates to us could be credible and fascinating only to persons who had taken in the mysteries of the Hebrew Bible with their mothers' milk, and who were as familiar with Genesis as with the chronicles of their own country. The poem presupposes a homely knowledge of and confidence in the scheme of the Old Testament, and in this sense, though perhaps in this sense only, those are right who see in *Paradise Lost* a characteristically "puritan" poem. If we take a Puritan to be a man steeped in Bible lore, then we may say that only "puritans" can properly appreciate the later poems of Milton, although there is much in the texture of these works which few Puritans, in the exacter sense, would, if they understood it, tolerate. It is a very notable fact that the only English epic is also the only epic taken from Biblical sources. So great has been the force of Milton that he has stamped on English eyes the picture he himself created of the scenes of Genesis, and Huxley complained that it was the seventh book of *Paradise Lost*, and not any mis-

reading of Moses, which had imprinted indelibly on the English public mind its system of a false cosmogony.

The Fall and the Redemption of Man were themes of surpassing interest and importance, but at the first blush they might seem highly improper for lengthy treatment in blank verse. We shudder to think how they would have been dealt with by some of Milton's sterner co-religionists—how in Milton's youth they had been treated, for instance, by Sylvester and by Quarles. But it is necessary to insist that Milton stood not closer, intellectually, to such a divine as Baxter than he did to, let us say, such a seriously minded lay-churchman as Cowley. He was totally separated from either, and in all æsthetic questions was, happily for us, a law unto himself. Hence he allowed himself a full exercise of the ornaments with which his humanistic studies had enriched him. His brain was not an empty conventicle, stored with none but the necessities of devotion: it was hung round with the spoils of paganism and garlanded with Dionysiac ivy. Within the walls of his protesting contemporaries no music had been permitted but that of the staidest psalmody. In the chapel of Milton's imagination, entirely devoted though it was to a Biblical form of worship, there were flutes and trumpets to accompany one vast commanding organ. The peculiarity of Milton's position was that among Puritans he was an artist, and yet among artists a Puritan.


Paradise loſt.

A

POEM

Written in

TEN BOOKS

By JOHN MILTON.

Licenſed and Entred according to Order.

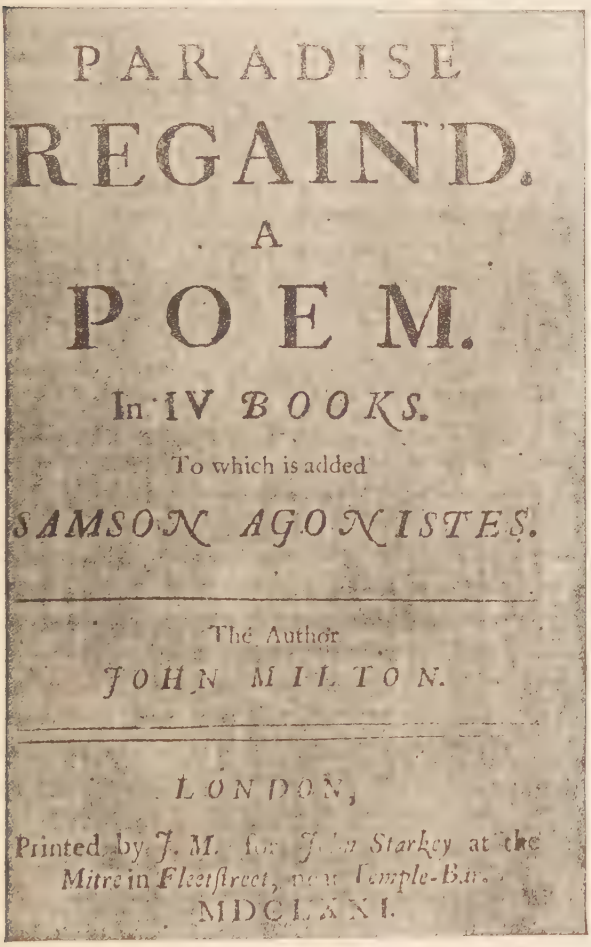
LONDON

Printed, and are to be ſold by Peter Parker under Creed Church, neer Aldgate; And by Robert Boulter at the Turks Head in Biſhopſgate-ſtreet; And Matthias Walker, under St. Dunſtons Church in Fleet-ſtreet, 1667.

Title-page of Milton's "Paradise Lost," First Edition, 1667

Commentaries abound on the scheme, the theology, the dogmatic ideas of *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*. These, it may boldly be suggested, would

scarcely in these days be sufficient to keep these epics alive, were it not for the subsidiary enchantments of the very ornament which to grave minds may at first have seemed out of place. Dryden, with his admirable perspicuity, early perceived that it was precisely where the language of the Authorised Version trammelled him too much that Milton failed, inserting what Dryden calls "a track of Scripture" into the text. It is where he escapes from Scriptural tradition that the grandiose or voluptuous images throng his fancy, and the melody passes from stop to stop, from the reed-tone of the bowers of Paradise to the open diapason of the council of the rebel angels. As he grew older the taste of Milton grew more austere. The change in the character of his ornament is deeply marked when we ascend from the alpine meadows of *Paradise Lost* to the peaks of *Paradise Regained*, where the imaginative air is so highly rarefied that many readers find it difficult to breathe. Internal evidence may lead us to suppose *Samson Agonistes* to be an even later manifestation of a genius that was rapidly rising into an atmosphere too thin for human enjoyment. Milton had declared, in a sublime utterance of his early life, that the highest poetry was not "to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters," but by the direct purification of divine fire placed on the lips of the elect by the hallowed fingers of the seraphim. That inspiration, he did not question, ultimately came to him, and in its light he wrote. But we do him no dishonour after these years if we confess that he owed more of his charm than he acknowledged to the aid of those siren daughters. He was blind, and could not refresh the sources of memory, and by-and-by


PARADISE
REGAIND.
A
POEM.
In IV BOOKS.
To which is added
SAMSON AGONISTES.
The Author
JOHN MILTON.
LONDON,
Printed by J. M. for John Starkey at the Mitre in Fleetstreet, near Temple-Bar.
MDCLXXI.

Title-page of Milton's "Paradise Regained," First Edition, 1671

the sirens, like his own earthly daughters, forsook him, leaving him in the dry and scarce tolerable isolation of his own integral dignity. Without his ineffable charm the Milton of these later poems would scarcely be readable, and that charm consists largely in two elements—his exquisite use of pagan or secular imagery, and the unequalled variety and harmony of his versification.

The blank verse of the epics has been at once the model and the despair of all who have attempted that easiest and hardest of measures since the end of the seventeenth century. On his manipulation of this form Milton founds his claim to be acknowledged the greatest artist or artificer in verse that the English race has produced. The typical blank iambic line has five full and uniform stresses, such as we find in correct but timid versifiers throughout our literature. All brilliant writers from Shakespeare downwards have shown their mastery of the form by the harmonious variation of the number and value of these stresses; but Milton goes much further in this respect than any other poet, and, without ever losing his hold upon the norm, plays with it as a great pianist plays with an air. His variations of stress, his inversions of rhythm, what have been called his "dactylic" and "trochaic" effects, add immeasurably to the freshness and beauty of the poem. When we read *Paradise Lost* aloud, we are surprised at the absence of that monotony which mars our pleasure in reading most other works of a like length and sedateness. No one with an ear can ever have found Milton dull, and the prime cause of this perennial freshness is the amazing art with which the blank verse is varied. It leaps like water from a spring, always in the same direction and volume, yet never for two consecutive moments in exactly the same form.

John Milton

From an Original Drawing at Windsor Castle

From "Paradise Lost."

. . . Overhead up grew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
Cedar and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene ; and, as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung :
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighbouring round ;
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once, of golden hue,
Appear'd, with gay enamell'd colours mix'd :
On which the sun more glad impress'd his beams,
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath shower'd the earth ; so lovely seem'd
That landskip : and of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair : now gentle gales
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabean odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest ; with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
Cheer'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles.
So entertain'd those odorous sweets the fiend.

From "Paradise Regained."

Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,
Westward, much nearer by south-west, behold,
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands,
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades.
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long ;
There, flowery hill, Hymettus, with the sound
Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
To studious musing ; there Ilissus rolls
His whispering stream : within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages ; his, who bred

Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next:
There shalt Thou hear and learn the secret power
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-measured verse,
Æolian charms, and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer call'd,
Whose poem Phœbus challenged for his own:
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
In chorus or iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight received
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,
High actions, and high passions best describing.

Towards the end of the period we have been considering, prose was cultivated in England by a great many persons who have no place at all, or but a secondary place, in the history of the development of style. They must not, however, be entirely overlooked; and for practical purposes they may be divided into three classes. There were, firstly, those who had something to say about purely scientific speculation, and who followed WILKINS into the paths of what was called experimental philosophy. Secondly, there were those who gave in their adherence to the Cambridge school of divines, and who, in opposition to Hobbes, asserted the liberty of the will, encouraging a movement towards the spiritual and mystic side of things. Of these the leaders were HENRY MORE, and, in his *True Intellectual System of the Universe*, 1678, RALPH CUDWORTH (1617–1688). Thirdly, there were the body of miscellaneous writers, autobiographers, antiquaries, diarists and the like, who with infinite patience and self-satisfaction built up the secret history of the age or helped to preserve its muniments. Of these minor writers of the Commonwealth, it has to be confessed that their prose presents no features of great interest, apart from the facts or the ideas with which it deals. Each of them has a tendency to wordiness; all become tedious at last from their untiring sinuosity. They are didactic and scholastic in their attitude to literature; their ambition makes them often cumbrous, and they are delightful only when some gleam of human experience seduces them into forgetfulness of it. Everything points to the necessity of relieving English style by elements of lucidity, brevity and grace—those qualities, in fact, which the next chapter introduces to our notice in writers like Tillotson, Halifax and Temple.

John Wilkins (1614–1672) was the son of an Oxford goldsmith, and was educated at Daventry under the charge of his grandfather, John Dod, "the famous Decalogist," and at a private school in Oxford. He passed rapidly and with credit

through the university, entered into Holy Orders, and became chaplain to the Palatine of the Rhine. In 1638 he published the most remarkable of his speculative works, *The Discovery of a New World*, followed in 1640 by *The Earth may be a Planet.* His *Mercury* in 1641, and *Mathematical Magic*, 1648, complete the list of Wilkins's more important publications. He had a splendid inter-university career, being appointed Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, in 1648, and Master of Trinity, Cambridge, in 1659. But as he was a parliamentarian, he was ejected at the Restoration. After a period of very low fortunes, he was made Dean of Ripon in 1664, and Bishop of Chester in 1668. He died in London on the 19th of November 1672. The whole life of Wilkins was devoted to two aims, the extension of scientific investigation, or, as it was then called, "philosophical" experiment, and the reconciliation of the Dissenters with the Church of England. It is in him that we first observe certain intellectual foibles of the approaching eighteenth century, and in particular its dislike of enthusiasm

John Wilkins

Elias Ashmole (1617–1692) was the greatest antiquary and archæologist of the second half of the seventeenth century. He was born at Lichfield on the 23rd of May 1617, and having a talent for music was trained to be a chorister in that cathedral. He afterwards came up to London, and adopted the law as a profession. After the Civil War, in which he took an active part on the King's side, Ashmole retired to Englefield in Berkshire, and "went a-simpling," that is to say, gave himself up to the study of botany. In 1649 he settled in London, and began his famous collection of the works of the English Chemists, issued in 1652. At the Restoration Ashmole was made Windsor Herald, and in 1661 Secretary of Surinam, which colony he administered from London. He became very wealthy and loaded with honours. In 1679 a fire destroyed a great portion of his vast collection of antiquities and curiosities; the remainder he presented in 1683 to the University of Oxford, which had erected a stately building to receive them and Ashmole's books and MSS. He died on the 18th of May 1692, and was buried in South Lambeth Church, under a monument of black marble, which, after describing his demise, added "but while the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford stands, he shall never die." His *Diary*, which was printed in 1717, is a garrulous and pleasing fragment of auto-

biography. In his more public manner, Ashmole writes very elaborately and politely, in rich brocaded English, of which the following extract from the preface to the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* may be taken as an example :—

Elias Ashmole

"The mineral stone is wrought up to a degree only, and hath the power of transmuting any imperfect earthy matter into its utmost degree of perfection; that is, to convert the basest metals into perfect gold and silver, flints into all manner of precious stones (as rubies, saphirs, emeralds, and diamonds), and many more experiments of the like nature. But as this is but a part, so it is the least share of the blessing which may be acquired by the philosopher's materia if the full virtue thereof were known. Gold I confess, is a delicious object, a goodly light which we admire and gaze upon, *ut pueri in Junonis avem*, but as to make gold (saith an incomparable author) is the chiefest intent of the alchymist, so was it scarce any intent of the antient philosophers and the lowest use the adepts made of this materia. For they being lovers of wisdom more than worldly wealth, drove at higher and more excellent operations, and certainly he to whom the whole course of nature lies open, rejoiceth not that he can make gold and silver, or the devils to become subjected unto him, as he sees the heavens open, the angels of God ascending and descending, and that his own name is fairly written in *the book of life*."

Another distinguished antiquary was **John Aubrey** (1626–1697), who was occupied, in company with **Anthony à Wood** (1632-1695), in collecting and preserving a vast quantity of miscellaneous information which might else have been lost. It was Aubrey who called attention to the historic value of Stonehenge, and who encouraged the great scheme of the *Monasticon Anglicanum*. It was Wood who drew together, in his *Athenæ Oxonienses* and elsewhere, inestimable records of public and private life in the University. Much of the work of both these industrious enthusiasts was posthumous.

Among the minor writers of the middle of the century a place must be found for the Fanshawes, a distinguished and accomplished couple. **Sir Richard Fanshawe**

(1607–1666) was educated at Cambridge, and very early entered the diplomatic service. Charles I. sent him to Spain in 1635; his life was a busy and a romantic one throughout the Civil War. After the Restoration, Fanshawe was employed in embassies to Portugal and Spain, and died of a violent fever in Madrid, on the 16th of June 1666. He published a very popular version of Guarini's *Pastor Fido* in 1646, a translation of the *Lusiads* in 1655, other translations from Spanish and Portuguese, and in 1664 a few original poems. In 1644, while at Oxford, he married **Anne Harrison** (1625–1680), who left a volume of her *Memoirs* in MS. These were published first in 1829, and contain much that is interesting and vivid. Another memoir-writer was **Lucy Apsley (Mrs. Hutchinson)** (born in 1620), who married in 1638 a Puritan colonel, who was afterwards one of the regicide judges, and governor of Nottingham Castle for the Parliament. After the death of her husband, who was imprisoned in Sandown Castle till he died in 1664, she wrote down, between 1664 and 1671, for the instruction of her children, a volume of *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, to which she prefixed an autobiography. These were not published until 1806. The date of her death is not known. From Mrs. Hutchinson's account of her own childhood, we quote an entertaining passage:—

Sir Richard Fanshawe

> "My father would have me learn Latin, and I was so apt that I outstripped my brothers who were at school, although my father's chaplain that was my tutor was a pitiful dull fellow. My brothers, who had a great deal of wit, had some emulation at the progress I made in my learning, which very well pleased my father, though my mother would have been contented I had not so wholly addicted myself to that as to neglect my other qualities. As for music and dancing, I profited very little in them, and would never practise my lute or harpsichords but when my masters were with me; and for my needle, I absolutely hated it. Play among other children I despised, and

when I was forced to entertain such as came to visit me, I tired them with more grave instructions than their mothers, and plucked all their babies [dolls] to pieces, and kept the children in such awe that they were glad when I entertained myself with elder company, to whom I was very acceptable; and, living in the house with many persons that had a great deal of wit, and very profitable serious discourses being frequent at my father's table and in my mother's drawing-room, I was very attentive to all, and gathered up things that I would utter again to great admiration of many, that took my memory and imitation for wit."

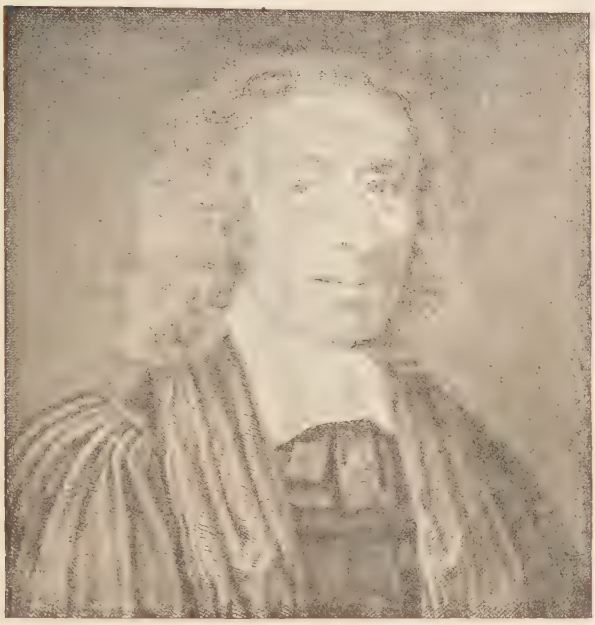
Lady Fanshawe

Much of the verse of the transitional period took ugly and eccentric forms, and is worthy of notice now solely on account of its curiosity. The most impracticable ideas clothed in the most extravagant language, render the philosophical verse of the late Commonwealth perfectly unreadable. In HENRY MORE, however, we have some survival of the sinuous sweetness of Spenser; in STANLEY the colours which had flushed so freshly and rosily in the Elizabethan lyrists finally faded away. What was lacking to all these latest verse-writers of the Renaissance was not so much talent or skill, as taste. They had no dignity of fancy, no propriety or harmony of style. And their errors simply made inevitable the change in the whole texture and character of English prose which was, even as they wrote, beginning to be manifested.

Lucy Hutchinson

In the group of so-called English Platonists, the leader and the most gifted with literary graces was **Henry More** (1614–1687) He was born at Grantham in Lincoln-

shire in October 1614, and was the child of Calvinist parents. He proceeded to Eton and to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he was acquainted with Milton. He continued to live at Cambridge, serene and unruffled by the political storms of the country, for the whole of his life. He died on the 1st of September 1687, and was buried in his college chapel. His principal work in poetry, *Psychodia Platonica*;[1] *or, a Platonical Song of the Soul*, originally appeared in 1642. More's prose works are full of transcendental mysticism, "vain, airy, Platonical, and chimerical"; *The Mystery of Iniquity*, 1664, is perhaps the most curious of them. His philosophical poetry, which is of great technical excellence, is more agreeable. Here is a specimen of it:—



Henry More

"O happy they that then the first are born,
While yet the world is in her vernal pride;
For old corruption quite away is worn,
As metal pure, so is her mould well-tried;
Sweet dews, cool breathing airs, and spaces wide
Of precious spicery wafted with soft wind,
Fair comely bodies, goodly beautified,
Snow-limb'd, rose-cheek'd, rube-lipp'd, pearl-teeth'd, star-ey'nd;
Their parts, each fair, in fit proportion all combin'd."

John Cleveland (1613–1658), who can hardly be called a poet, was a Cambridge royalist who published *The Character of a London Diurnal* in 1647, and collected his *Poems* in 1651. These productions, mainly satirical, were exactly to the taste of the age, and were incessantly reprinted for fifty years. Cleveland's best couplet occurs in a rough attack on the Scotch:—

John Cleveland

"Had Cain been Scot, God would have chang'd his doom,
Not forc'd him wander, but confin'd him home."

[1] The title of this work is rarely given correctly. The whole "Platonical Song" is entitled *Psychodia Platonica*, but is made up of "four several poems" or cantos, respectively named *Psychozoia*, *Psychathanasia*, *Antipsychopannuchia* and *Antimonopsychia*.

A strong propensity to literature was discovered in that fantastic couple, **William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle** (1592–1676) and his Duchess, **Margaret Lucas** (1624?–1674). The Duke wrote romantic comedies in verse, in which Shirley is believed to have helped him; and he is better remembered by his stately treatise on horsemanship (1667), a very handsome illustrated edition of which had appeared in French, at Antwerp, ten years earlier. The Duke, whom Clarendon describes as "a very fine gentleman," was "neat in shape and exactly proportioned, his stature of a middle size, and his complexion sanguine. The Duchess, who was his second wife, and married him when he was Marquis, in 1645, was one of the most eccentric persons of her time; her great delight was in attiring herself in strange and costly garments, the fashion of which she had invented herself. Her most pleasing quality was her frank, absorbed idolatry of her elderly husband, whose *Life* she wrote during his lifetime (1667). She was the author of no fewer than twenty-six plays, which she published in two folio volumes in 1662 and 1668. Her modesty excused her. In a general prologue she said:—

William Cavendish, Earl (afterwards Duke) of Newcastle

From an Engraving by Holl, after the Picture by Vandyck in the Collection of Earl Spencer

> "But, noble readers, do not think my plays
> Are such as have been writ in former days,
> As Jonson, Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher writ;
> Mine want their learning, reading, language, wit.
> The Latin phrases I could never tell,
> But Jonson could, which made him write so well.
> Greek, Latin poets I could never read,
> Not their historians, but our English Speed."

Illustration from the Duke of Newcastle's "Méthode et Invention nouvelle de dresser les chevaux"

Thomas Stanley (1625–1678), in whom the poetry of artifice and fancy expired, was born at Cumberlaw in Herts; he was the cousin of Lovelace, and he was educated in an atmosphere of literature. He proceeded to Cambridge, and was transferred to Oxford. He was wealthy, married young, and spent much time on the Continent. He was the friend and companion, and at need the helper of many poets. He frankly preferred the decadent and Alexandrine schools of imagination to those of healthier times, and his poets of predilection were Anacreon, Moschus, Austonius, Gongora, and Marino. Stanley's *Poems* appeared in 1647; his beautiful translations, *Europa*, *Cupid Crucified*, *Venus Vigils*, in 1649. Stanley's most serious work, however, was his great prose *History of Philosophy*, which appeared between 1655 and 1662. He was one of the finest critical scholars of the age. A specimen of Stanley's rich meandering versification may be given from *Cupid Crucified*:—

Margaret Lucas, Duchess of Newcastle

"A hundred more, who their old love's review
With sad, yet sweet complaints, their pains renew;
In midst of whom, by the black shade benighted,
With whizzing wings Love unawares alighted;
All knew the Boy; and, recollecting, thought him
Common offender; though damp clouds about him
Obscure his belt, with golden buckles bright,
His quiver and his radiant torches' light,
Yet do they know him; and begin to show
Vain rage upon the lovely wandering foe."

CHAPTER II

THE AGE OF DRYDEN

1660–1700

THE year 1660 provides us with a landmark which is perhaps more salient than any other in the history of English literature. In most instances the dates with which we divide our chronicle are merely approximations, points empirically taken to mark the vague transition from one age to another. But when Monk went down to Dover to welcome the agitated and astonished Charles, it was not monarchy only that he received into England, but a fresh era in literature and the arts. With that act of his, the old English Renaissance, which had long been dying, ceased to breathe, and a new departure of intellectual civilisation began. Henceforth the ideals of the leading minds of England were diametrically changed. If they had looked westwards, they now looked towards the east. Instantly those men who still remained loyal to the Jacobean habit passed out of fashion, and even out of notice, while those who had foreseen the new order of things, or had been constitutionally prepared for it, stood out on a sudden as pioneers and leaders of the new army of intelligence.

To us the post-Restoration writings of Milton possess a greater value than all else that was produced in verse for more than a hundred years; but in taking an historical survey we must endeavour to realise that his influence on the age he lived in was nil, and that to unprejudiced persons of education living in London about 1665, the author of *Paradise Lost* was something less than Flecknoe or Flatman. Nor to us, who see beneath the surface, does he present any features which bring him into the general movement of literature. He was a species in himself—a vast, unrelated Phœnix. In his youth, as we have seen, Milton had been slightly subjected to influences from Shakespeare, Spenser, and even the disciples of Spenser; but after his long silence he emerges with a style absolutely formed, derived from no earlier poet, and destined for half a century to influence no later one. Critics amuse themselves by detecting in *Paradise Lost* relics of Du Bartas, of Vondel, of Cowley, even of lesser men; but these were mere fragments of ornament disdainfully transferred to Milton's magnificent edifice as material, not as modifying by a jot the character of its architecture. It is very strange to think of the aged Milton, in stately patience, waiting for death to come to

him in his relative obscurity, yet not doubting for a moment that he had succeeded in that "accomplishment of greatest things" to which his heart had been set at Cambridge more than forty years before.

The Decline of Literature

We turn from Milton, then, wrapped like Moses in a cloud, and the contrast is great when we concentrate our attention on the state of letters in England around the foot of his mountain; for here, at least, there was no isolation, but a combined unison of effort in a single direction was the central feature of the moment. During the strenuous political agitation of the Commonwealth, literature had practically come to an end in England. There were still, of course, men of talent, but they were weak, discouraged, unilluminated. Some were trying to keep alive, in its utter decrepitude, the Jacobean method of writing; others were looking ahead, and were ready, at the cost of what capricious beauty remained in English verse, to inaugurate a new school of reason and correctness. When 1660 brought back the Court, with its Latin sympathies, the first of these two classes faded like ghosts at cockcrow. Herrick, Shirley, Vaughan long survived the Restoration, but no notice of them or of their writings is to be found in any of the serious criticisms of the age, although they held their place in the Restoration anthologies. On the other hand, the second class came forth at once into prominence, and four small poets—Waller, with his precise grace; Denham, with his dry vigour; Davenant, who restored the drama; Cowley, who glorified intellect and exact speculation—were hailed at once as the masters of a new school and the martyrs to a conquered barbarism. It was felt, in a vague way, that they had been holding the fort, and theirs were the honours of a relieved and gallant garrison.

The Commonwealth, contemplating more serious matters, had neglected and discouraged literature. The monarchy, under a king who desired to be known as a patron of wit, should instantly have caused it to flourish; but for several years after 1660—why, we can hardly tell—scarcely anything of the least value was composed. The four poets just enumerated, in spite of the fame they had inherited, wrote none but a few occasional pieces down to the deaths of Cowley (1667) and Davenant (1668). There was a general consciousness that taste had suffered a revolution, but what direction it was now to take remained doubtful. The returning cavaliers had brought the message back from France that the savagery of English letters was to cease, but something better than Davenant's plays or even Cowley's odes must surely take its place. The country was eager for guidance, yet without a guide. No one felt this more perspicaciously than the youthful Dryden, who described his own position long afterwards by saying that in those days he "was drawing the outlines of an art without any living master to instruct" him in it.

The Restoration

The guidance had to come from France, and the moment of the Restoration was not a fortunate one. The first great generation after Malherbe was drawing to a close, and the second had not quite begun. The development of English literature might have been steadier and purer, if the exiled English courtiers had been kept in Paris ten years longer, to witness the

death of Mazarin, the decay of the old Academic coterie, and the rise of Boileau and Racine. They left Chapelain behind them, and returned home to find Cowley—poets so strangely similar in their merits and in their faults, in their ambitions and in their failures, that it is hard to believe the resemblance wholly accidental. They had left poetry in France dry, harsh, positive, and they found it so in England. The only difference was that on this side of the Channel there was less of it, and that it was conducted here with infinitely less vigour, resource, and abundance. There was no Corneille in London, no Rotrou; the authority of Waller was late and feeble in comparison with that bequeathed by Malherbe.

It was, nevertheless, important to perceive, and the acutest Englishmen of letters did at once perceive, that what had been done in France about thirty years before was now just being begun in England; that is to say, the old loose romantic manner, say of Spenser or of Ronsard, was being totally abandoned in favour of "the rules," the unities, a closer prosody, a drier, exacter system of reasoning. Unfortunately, up to 1660 there was little real criticism of poetic style in France, and little effort to be dexterously complete all through a composition. Happy lines, a brilliant passage, had to excuse pages of flatness and ineptitude. So it was in England. A few single lines of Cowley are among the most beautiful of the century, and he has short jets of enchanting poetry, but these lie scattered in flat wildernesses of what is intolerably grotesque. The idea of uniform excellence was to be introduced, directly in France and then incidentally here, by Boileau, who was writing his first great satires when Charles II. was in the act of taking possession of his throne.

Charles II.

After the Portrait by John Greenhill

Even in these first stumbling days, however, the new school saw its goal before it. The old madness, the old quaint frenzy of fancy, the old symbolism and impressionism had utterly gone out. In their place, in the place of this liberty which had turned to licence, came the rigid following of "the ancients." The only guides for English verse in future were to be the pole-star of the Latin poets, and the rules of the French critics who sought to adapt Aristotle to modern life. What such a poet as Dryden tried to do was regulated by what, reading in the light of Scaliger and Casaubon, he found

the Latins had done. This excluded prettiness altogether, excluded the extravagances and violent antics of the natural school, but admitted, if the poet was skilful enough to develop them, such qualities as nobility of expression, lucidity of language, justice of thought, and closeness of reasoning, and these are the very qualities which we are presently to discern in Dryden.

Meanwhile, although poetry, mainly in the criticism of poetry, was the subject uppermost in the minds of the men of wit and pleasure who clustered around the Court of Charles, attention was paid, and with no little seriousness, to the deplorable state of prose. Here the distinction between old and new could not be drawn with as much sharpness as it could in verse, yet here also there was a crisis imminent. The florid, involved, and often very charming prose of such writers as Jeremy Taylor, Fuller, and Henry More, was naturally destined to become obsolete. Its long-windedness, its exuberance, its caprices of style, marked it out for speedy decay; its beauties, and they have been already dwelt upon, were dolphin colours. A time had come when what people craved in prose was something simpler and terser in form, less ornate, less orotund, more supple in dealing with logical sequences of ideas. England had produced several divines, essayists, and historians of great distinction, but she had hitherto failed to bring forth a Pascal.

The Royal Society

The returning Royalists had left behind them in Paris an Academy which, with many faults, had yet for a quarter of a century been a great power for good in France. It had held up a standard of literature, had enforced rules, had driven the stray sheep of letters into something resembling a flock. The first important step taken in intellectual life after the Restoration was the foundation in England of a body which at its initiation seemed more or less closely to resemble the French Academy. In 1661 Cowley had issued his *Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy*, the direct result of which was the institution of the Royal Society in 1662, with the King as patron, and Lord Brouncker, the mathematician, as first president. Cowley's tract was merely the match which set fire to a scheme which had long been preparing for the encouragement of experimental knowledge. As every one is aware, the Royal Society soon turned its attention exclusively to the exacter sciences, but most of the leading English poets and prose-writers were among its earlier members, and it does not seem to have been observed by the historians of our literature that the original scope of the assembly included the renovation of English prose. According to the official definition of the infant Royal Society, they "exacted from all their members a close, naked, natural way of speaking, positive expressions, clear senses, a native easiness, bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can," and passed "a resolution to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style." No literary Academy could have done more; and although the Royal Society soon dropped all pretensions to jurisdiction over prose-writing, this early action, coming when it did, can but have been of immense service

to the new school. Nor must it be forgotten that among these savants who bound themselves to the exercise of lucidity and brevity in composition were Boyle, Clarendon, Barrow, Evelyn, Pearson, Pepys, Stanley, Thomas Burnet, the very representatives of all that was most vivid in the prose of the age. Of these not all survived to learn the lesson that they taught, but it is therefore, perhaps, the more significant that they should have accepted it in principle.

Viscount Brouncker

From an Engraving after the Portrait by Sir Peter Lely

In all this movement JOHN DRYDEN'S place was still insignificant. In his thirtieth year he was, as a later Laureate put it, faintly distinguished. But he was presently to find his opportunity in the resuscitation of dramatic poetry. From before the death of Ben Jonson the stage had begun to languish, and its decline cannot in fairness be attributed entirely to the zeal of the Puritans. But in 1641 Parliament had issued an ordinance ordaining that public stage-plays should cease, those who had been in the habit of indulging in these spectacles of lascivious pleasure being sternly recommended to consider repentance, reconciliation, and peace with God. This charge being found insufficient, an Act was passed in 1648 ordering that all theatres should be dismantled, all convicted actors publicly whipped, and all spectators fined. An attempt to perform the *Bloody Brother* of Fletcher merely proved that the authorities were in deadly earnest, for the actors were carried off to prison in their stage clothes. The drama is a form of art which cannot exist in a vacuum; starved of all opportunities of exercise, English play-writing died of inanition. Nothing could be more abjectly incompetent and illiterate than the closet-dramas printed during the Commonwealth. Men who had not seen a play for twenty years had completely forgotten what a play should be. It is scarcely credible that an art which had been raised to perfection by Shakespeare, should in half a century sink into such an abysm of feebleness as we find, for example, in the unacted dramas of the Killigrews. Nor did a spark of poetry, however wild and vague, survive in these degenerate successors of the school of Fletcher.

Drama

Davenant

In the midst of this extremity of decay the theatres were once more opened. In 1656 Sir WILLIAM DAVENANT was permitted to invite the public to "an entertainment by declamation and music, after the manner of the ancients," at Rutland House, in the City. This was the thin end of the wedge indeed; but it has been wrongly described as a play, or even an opera. There was no dialogue, but extremely long rhapsodies in prose (which must surely have been read) were broken by songs and instrumental music. As no harm came of this experiment, in 1658 Davenant was allowed to open the old dismantled Cockpit in Drury Lane, and there produced his English opera, the *Siege of Rhodes*, which had been already seen at Rutland House. This dramatic production, afterwards greatly enlarged, was prodigiously admired in the Court of Charles II., and was looked upon as the standing-point of the new drama. The critics of the Restoration are never tired of applauding this "perfect opera," the versification of which was smooth and ingeniously varied indeed, yet without a touch of even rhetorical poetry. As nothing befell the daring Davenant, he was emboldened to bring out five-act plays, tragedies and comedies of his own, at Drury Lane, and, almost immediately after the King's return, patents were granted both to him and to Killigrew. In Betterton, Harris, and Mrs. Sanderson (for women now first began to take women's parts) a school of young actors was presently discovered, and the stage flourished again as if Puritanism had never existed.

Thomas Betterton

From an Engraving after the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

But it was one thing to have clever actors and a protected stage, and quite another to create a dramatic literature. It might be very well for enthusiastic contemporaries to say that in his plays Davenant "does outdo both ancients and the moderns too," but these were simply execrable as pieces of writing. The long silence of the Commonwealth weighed upon the playwrights. Only one man in this first period wrote decently, a robust

vigorous imitator of Ben Jonson, JOHN WILSON, whose comedies and tragedies reproduced the manner of that master with remarkable skill. This, however, proved to be a false start. The new drama was no more to spring from the study of Ben Jonson than from a dim reminiscence of Shakespeare and Fletcher. It was to come from France, and mainly from Corneille. The old, almost simultaneous translation of the *Cid*, by Joseph Rutter, was forgotten; but in the years just preceding the Restoration Sir William Lower had published a series of versions of Corneille's tragedies, and these must have been widely read. In his attempts at lyrical drama, Davenant was undoubtedly imitating not Corneille only, but Quinault. Early in his critical career, Dryden announced that the four great models were Aristotle, Horace, Ben Jonson, and Corneille; and though he refers vaguely and largely to the dramatists of Italy and Spain, fearing by too great praise of a Frenchman to wound English susceptibilities, it is plain that Dryden in his early tragedies is always eagerly watching Corneille.

In that valuable and admirable treatise, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668, published when he had already produced five of his dramatic experiments, Dryden very clearly and unflinchingly lays down the law about theatrical composition. Plays are for the future to be "regular"—that is to say, they are to respect the unities of time, place, and action; "no theatre in the world has anything so absurd as the English tragi-comedy," and this is to be rigorously abandoned; a great simplicity of plot, a broad and definite catastrophe, an observation of the laws of stage decorum, these are to mark the English theatre in future, as they already are the ornament of the French. After all this, we are startled to discover Dryden turning against his new allies, praising the English irregularity, finding fault with Corneille, and finally unravelling his whole critical web with a charming admission: "I admire the pattern of elaborate writing, but—I love Shakespeare." The fact is that the great spirit of Dryden, here at the practical outset of his career, was torn between two aims. He saw that English poetry was exhausted, disillusioned, bankrupt, and that nothing short of a complete revolution would revive it; he saw that the Latin civilisation was opening its arms, and that England was falling into them, fascinated like a bird by a snake (and Dryden also was fascinated and could not resist); yet, all the time, he was hankering after the lost poetry, and wishing that a compromise could be made between Shakespeare and Aristotle, Fletcher and Molière. So, with all his effort to create "heroic drama" in England, no really well-constructed piece, no closely wrought and highly polished *Cinna*, was to reward Dryden for his cultivation of the unities.

The Heroic Plays

He could not, of course, foresee this, and the success which followed his suggestion, made in 1664, that "the excellence and dignity of rhyme" should be added to serious drama, must have made him look upon himself as a great and happy innovator, although the actual inaugurator of the rhymed heroic play was perhaps the Earl of Orrery. Etheredge, in the graver scenes of his *Comical Revenge*, instantly adopted the rhyming couplet,

Dryden's own tragedies followed, and blank verse was practically abandoned until 1678. During these fourteen years, Sedley, Crowne, Settle, Otway, and Lee, in succession between 1668 and 1675, came to the front as industrious contributors to the tragic stage, each, with a touching docility, accepting on most occasions the burden of rhyme; we therefore possess a solid mass of dramatic literature, much of it quite skilful in its own way, produced in a form closely analogous to that of the French. These are what were known as the "heroic plays," of which Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* is the type. This strange experiment has received from the critics of more recent times little but ridicule, and it may be admitted that it is not easy to approach it with sympathy. Still, certain facts should make it important to the literary historian. The taste for heroic drama showed a singularly literary preoccupation on the part of the public. To listen to the "cat and puss" dialogue, the *στιχομυθία*, required a cultivated attention, and the ear which delighted in the richness of the rhyme could hardly be a vulgar one.

The advantages of the system lay in the elegance and nobility of the impression of life, the melody of the versification; its disadvantages were that it encouraged bombast and foppery, and was essentially monotonous. All was magnificent in those plays; the main personages were royal or on the steps of the throne. The heroic plays demanded a fuller stage presentment than the age might supply. If the *Indian Emperor* could now be acted under the management of some enterprising scenic artist, we should probably be charmed with the sonorous splendour of its couplets and the gorgeous ritual of its scenes. The *Rehearsal* (1672), with its delicious fooling, only added to the popular predilection for these royal tragedies. But Dryden, who had invented them, grew tired of them, and in *All for Love*, in 1678, he "disencumbered himself from rhyme." The whole flock of tragic poets immediately followed him, and heroic plays were an exploded fashion.

George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham

From an Engraving after the Portrait by Verelst

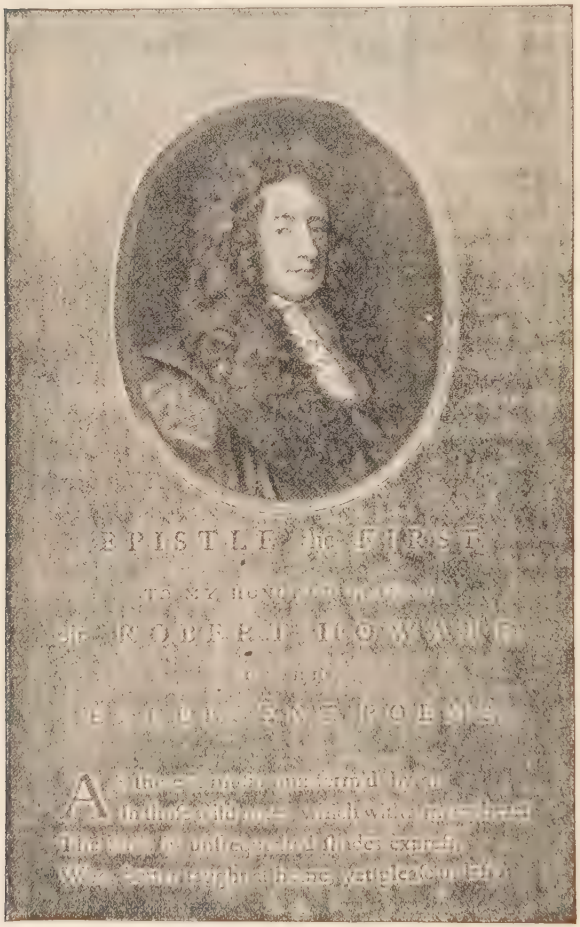
If we turn to these ponderous tragedies now, it is principally, however, to study the essays which are prefixed to them. In the general interest awakened concerning the *technique* of literature, these were frequent; Lestrange, whose business it was to read them, complained that "a man had as good go to court without a cravat as appear in print without a preface." But Dryden's, composed, perhaps, in rivalry with the *Examens* of Corneille, are by far the most important, and form the first body of really serious and philosophical criticism to be discovered in English. We must not expect absolute consistency in these essays. They mark the growth of a mind, not the conditions of a mind settled in a fixed opinion. As fresh lights came up on his horizon, as he read Ben Jonson less and Shakespeare more, as Boileau and Bossu affected his taste, as Racine rose into his ken, and as he became more closely acquainted with the poets of antiquity, Dryden's views seem to vacillate, to be lacking in authority. But we err if this remains our final opinion; we mistake the movement of growth for the instability of weakness. To the last, Dryden was a living force in letters, spreading, progressing, stimulating others by the ceaseless stimulus which he himself received from literature.

John Dryden

After the Portrait by James Maubert

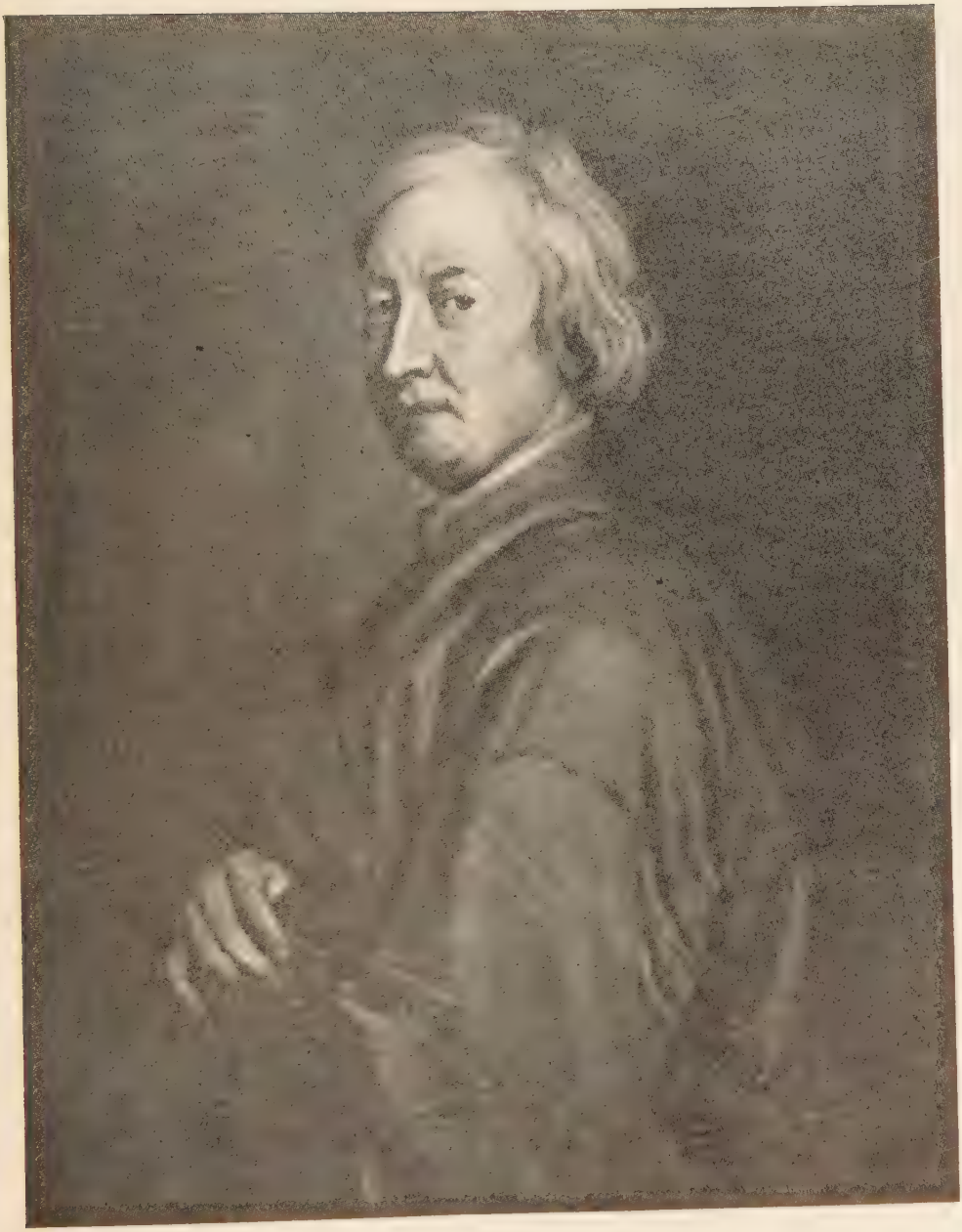
John Dryden (1631–1700) was the son of Erasmus Dryden and Mary Pickering his wife, of Tichmarsh, in the county of Northampton. He was born, probably on the 9th of August 1631, in the vicarage of Aldwinkle All Saints, near Oundle. His earliest education was gained in the village schools of Titmarsh and Oundle. He was a King's Scholar at Westminster under the famous Dr. Busby from 1640 to 1650, and matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, in the summer of the latter year. He got into trouble at college, and was not merely "rebuked on the head," but in 1652 discom- *Dryden*

monsed. He took his degree in 1654. Dryden stayed seven years at Cambridge, but he retained against that university a life-long grudge which has never been explained; she was always the "Thebes" of his "green unknowing youth." We have few examples of his early verse—an *Elegy on Lord Hastings* (1649), a commendatory epistle before Hoddesdon's *Sion and Parnassus* (1650). In 1654 Erasmus Dryden died, and left the poet small estates in his native county. It has been supposed that in 1657 Dryden came up to London, and became clerk to his cousin, Sir Gilbert Pickering. In 1659 he published the *Heroic Stanzas* on the death of Oliver Cromwell, in which his talent as a versifier was earliest displayed. It is strange that, in spite of his extreme celebrity in later years, scarcely anything is known about the early life of Dryden. Two poems, *Astræa Redux* (1660) and the *Coronation Panegyrick* (1661), show him an ardent royalist; in 1663 he married Lady Elizabeth Howard, the eldest daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. Not much is known about this person, but her character has been impugned by gossip, and she was evidently no intellectual companion for Dryden. His father-in-law allowed the newly-married couple to share his country-house at Charlton, and here they seem to have lived for three or four years. Dryden now began to adopt play-writing as a profession, and his first drama, *The Wild Gallant*, was acted before his marriage. *The Rival Ladies* followed later in the same year, 1663. For a long time the personal history of Dryden is confined to a list of his very frequent publications, of which the poem called *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), and the double heroic tragedy, *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), seem the most important. He was very actively employed, since, about 1668, he entered into a contract with the actors of the King's Theatre to supply them with three new plays a year at a fixed rate of payment. He was also, in 1670, made poet laureate and historiographer, with £200 a year and a butt of sack. It is supposed that after the Great Fire, Dryden settled in the house in



Sir Robert Howard, Dryden's Brother-in-law

From Dryden's "Miscellanies"



John Dryden.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

Gerrard Street, Soho, which remained his London home until his death, but he is vaguely identified also with residences in Fetter Lane, and, later on, in Long Acre. His busy life seems to have passed almost without an event until his fiftieth year, when his close connection with the theatre, which had culminated in *The Spanish Friar* (1681), was provisionally broken off. During these years we have to think of Dryden as prosperous in his regular industry, and as moving easily in "smart" society; but he became obnoxious to Rochester in 1675, and five years later the anger of that odious person had risen to such a pitch that he hired "Black Will" and other ruffians in masks to waylay Dryden at night in Rose Alley, Covent Garden, and to beat him cruelly with cudgels. Strangely enough, this cowardly business produced no sense of public indignation, but was supposed to lower the prestige of the hapless Dryden very seriously. After 1680, he was never very prosperous again. On the other hand, it was only now that his genius began to assert itself; up to the age of fifty he had produced nothing of superlative excellence. But now he became very deeply interested in the political situation produced in England by the bad government of Charles II. Finally, the intrigues of Shaftesbury roused him to indignation, and it is even believed that the king himself proposed to Dryden to give voice to his feelings in satire. Accordingly, in November 1681, he published the first part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, the earliest of four great didactic satires, issued within twelve months, which placed Dryden at the head of the poets of the age. At the close of 1683 he was appointed collector of customs in the port of London. He had turned to theological controversy, and had written *Religio Laici* (1682), followed by *The Hind and the Panther* (1687). Between the publication of the former and that of the latter of these works a great change had taken place in Dryden's convictions. Never before much exercised about religion, the scandals of the Popish Plot had drawn his attention to theological questions. When he wrote *Religio Laici*, he was still, on the whole, contented with the Church of England; but about 1685 he went over to Rome, and, in his second religious poem, the cruel Anglican Panther persecutes the milk-white Roman Hind. Dryden's conversion to Roman Catholic doctrine was almost coincident with the accession of James II., and his many enemies did not fail to charge him with despicable insincerity. But there is no evidence of this, and, on the other hand, through less good than evil, Dryden held by the Roman faith for the rest of his life. At the Revolution of 1688 he lost his office of poet laureate, for which he received £200, and all his other pensions lapsed, because he would not take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary. The laureateship was given to Shadwell, his most dogged enemy. Dryden's relations with the theatres had now almost ceased. He was thrown, therefore, at the age of fifty-seven, upon his intellectual resources, and he began to work anew, with a splendid fortitude and with inexhaustible energy. Lord Dorset came to his aid with a generous annuity, and Dryden was enabled to ride the storm of his adversities. Between 1690 and 1694 he wrote again for the stage, somewhat abundantly. As early as 1680, Dryden had turned his attention to poetical translation from the Latin classics, and now he determined to make it his serious business. He translated Persius and (with others) Juvenal in 1693, and began a vaster labour, that of making Virgil sing in English. This last appeared, and enjoyed a magnificent success, in 1697. He also gave much attention to versions of Ovid, Horace, and Lucretius, but completed the translation of none of these. Yet Dryden's competent and sturdy versions of the Latin poets occupy a large proportion of his entire works. This was highly remunera-

tive labour; if we may believe Pope, for his *Virgil* alone Dryden received £1200. During these years, too, Dryden did a vast amount of occasional writing for money: he supplied prologues and epilogues to other people's plays; he composed funeral poems (for that on the Countess of Abingdon he received £500); he translated prose books on popular subjects of the day; he contributed prefaces and complimentary verses to the publishers; in short, this great poet became the most active professional man of letters of the time, and earned what may have been a handsome, but was certainly a fluctuating income by miscellaneous labour with the pen. His noble ode called *Alexander's Feast* was thus written to order for the feast of St. Cecilia's Day, 1697. In November of 1699 was published the latest of Dryden's works, the folio of *Fables* (1700), in which were gathered together, with the narrative paraphrases from Chaucer and Boccaccio, several miscellany translations, and all the original poems of Dryden's later years, some 12,000 verses in all. This volume contains several of the most characteristic and best known of all the poet's productions, and in particular *Theodore and Honoria* and *Cymon and Iphigenia*, which criticism, for a century at least, was to place at the very summit of English narrative poetry. Although Dryden's imaginative power and technical skill had never been in a more brilliant condition, his physical health was now failing. He suffered from the gout in his feet, and having neglected it, one of his toes became inflamed and mortified. After a short but distressing illness, his admirers were informed on the 30th of April 1700 that "John Dryden, Esq., the famous poet, lies a-dying," and on the 1st of May he died in the house in Gerrard Street, Soho, where he had lived since 1686. A fortnight afterwards, his body having been meantime embalmed, Dryden was buried with great pomp in Westminster Abbey, by the side of Chaucer, but under "a rude and nameless stone." Not very much is recorded about the personal appearance and habits of Dryden, except that he had "a down look," pensive or melancholy, and that he was too pink and plump, for dignity. He was something of a sportsman, loved good company, had not a ready tongue in conversation, and was inclined in later years to drink more than suited his state of health. The rest must be sought for in his massive and solid treasury of conscientious literary work.

Dryden's House in Fetter Lane

(*Now demolished*)

Sir [October 1699.]

These Verses had waited on you with the former; but they then wanted that Correction which I have since given them, that they might bear the light of so great a Judge & Poet. I am now in feare that I have spurgd them out of their Spirit; as our Master Busby, used to whip a Boy so long, till he made him a Confirm'd Blockhead. My Cousin Dryden saw them in the Country; & the greatest Exception he made to them, was a Satyr against the Dutch valour in the late warr. He divin'd me to omit it, (to use his own words) out of the respect he had to his Soveraign. I obeyd his Commands; & left only the praises, which I think are due to the gallantry of my own Countrymen. In the discription which I have made of a Parliament Man, I think I have not only drawn the feature of my worthy Kinsman, but have also given my own opinion, of what an English man in Parliament ought to be; & deliver'd it as a Memorial of my own Principles to all Posterity. I have consulted the Judgment of my Undyard friends, who have lent of them the honour to be known to you, & they think there is nothing which can justly give offence, in that part of the Poem. I say not this, to cast a blind on your Judgment (which I could not do, if I indeavourd it) but to assure you, that nothing relating to the publique shall stand, without your permission. For it were to want Common Sence, to desire your patronage, & resolve to disoblige you: And I will not hazard my hopes of your protection by refusing to obey you in any thing, which I can perform with my Conscience or my Honour; So I am very confident you will never impose any other terms on me. My thoughts at present are fixd on Homer: And by my translation of the first Iliad, & find him a Poet more according to my Genius than Virgil: and Consequently hope I may do him more justice, in his flowry way of writing; which as it is liable to more faults, so it is capable of more beauties, than the exactness, & Sobriety of Virgil. Since 'tis for my Countrys honour as well as for my own, that I am willing to undertake this task; I hope not of being encouragd in it, by your favour who am Sir

Your most Obedient Servant

John Dryden.

Letter from John Dryden to Lord Halifax

From "Annus Mirabilis."

The mighty ghosts of our great Harrys rose,
And armed Edwards looked with anxious eyes,
To see this fleet among unequal foes,
By which fate promised them their Charles should rise.

Meantime the Belgians tack upon our rear,
And raking chase-guns through our sterns they send;
Close by, their fire-ships like jackals appear,
Who on their lions for the prey attend.

Silent in smoke of cannon they come on:
Such vapours once did fiery Cacus hide:
In these the height of pleased revenge is shown,
Who burn contented by another's side.

Illustration to "Annus Mirabilis"

From Dryden's "Miscellanies"

Sometimes from fighting squadrons of each fleet,
Deceived themselves, or to preserve some friend,
Two grappling Ætnas on the ocean meet,
And English fires with Belgian flames contend.

Now at each tack our little fleet grows less;
And, like maimed fowl, swim lagging on the main;
Their greater loss their numbers scarce confess,
While they lose cheaper than the English gain.

Have you not seen, when, whistled from the fist,
Some falcon stoops at what her eye designed,
And, with her eagerness the quarry missed,
Straight flies at check, and clips it down the wind?

The dastard crow that to the wood made wing,
And sees the groves no shelter can afford,
With her loud caws her craven kind does bring,
Who, safe in numbers, cuff the noble bird.

Among the Dutch thus Albemarle did fare:
He could not conquer, and disdained to fly:
Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,
Like falling Cæsar, decently to die.

John Wilson (1622?–1696?) very little is known. He was the son of the Rev. Aaron Wilson, of Plymouth, was born perhaps at Caermarthen, was educated at Exeter College, Oxford, became a student of Lincoln's Inn, and was called to the Bar about 1649. He became secretary to the Duke of York, by whose recommendation he was admitted to the service of the Duke of Ormonde, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. It is probable that he wrote his plays soon after the Restoration, and took advantage of a visit to London, when the theatres were fully resuscitated, to bring them before the public. At all events, his three best pieces, *The Cheats* and *The Projectors* and the tragedy of *Andronicus Commenius*, were all published in 1664–65. Wilson was appointed Recorder of Londonderry in 1681, and held that post until the siege in 1689. It is believed that he joined James II. in Dublin, and later found his way to London, where he died, near Leicester Fields, in or about 1696. He was the author of some legal and historical works, and is spoken of by a contemporary libeller as "little Wilson."

Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery (1621–1679), was the younger brother of Richard, Earl of Burlington and Cork, and fifth son of the great Earl of Cork. He was born on the 25th of April 1621, and in 1628 became Lord Broghill. He was educated in Dublin, and at a very early age discovered extraordinary talents. When he was fourteen, an older brother, Lord Kynalmeaky, took him to France and Italy for the Grand Tour; they returned to find the Civil War just breaking out. At the age of twenty, Lord Broghill married Lady Margaret Howard, and set out for Ireland, where war had now broken out, and where the young people were presently besieged in Lismore Castle. During the Civil War and the Commonwealth, Broghill behaved with unfailing energy and tact, conquering the goodwill of Cromwell without ever failing in his loyalty to Charles II., who, on the 5th of September 1660, created him Earl of Orrery, and placed him at the head of public affairs in Ireland. The plays of Lord Orrery were written to divert the leisure of his Court in Dublin, but were afterwards brought out, with great magnificence of costume, at the Duke of York's Theatre in London. They were collected as *Four New Plays* in 1670, having appeared in separate folio pamphlets during the preceding year. *Mustapha*, a romantic tragedy of Turkish conquest, appears to be the earliest of these heroic plays in rhyme, and is the most readable. After the death of Lord Orrery, which took place on the 16th of October 1679, two more tragedies and two so-called comedies of his were published, and his complete dramatic works in 1739.

Thomas Shadwell (1640–1692) was born of good family at Lawton Hall in Norfolk, and was bred to the law, but left Caius College, Cambridge, without taking a degree, in 1656, and neglected his studies for poetry and the society of the wits. His first play, *The Sullen Lovers*, 1668, a comedy in the manner of Ben Jonson, succeeded at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Shadwell became a regular writer for the stage. He threw in his lot with the Whigs, who as early as 1675 set him up as a rival to Dryden, and when the latter went over to Rome in 1688, Shadwell was appointed poet laureate and historiographer-royal in his place. He died suddenly at Chelsea on the 19th of November 1692, in consequence of an overdose of opium. His figure was coarse, unwieldy, and obese, and his conversation, which was profane and indelicate, was remarkable for its ungentlemanlike vulgarity of dialect. Shadwell had a certain

physical likeness to Ben Jonson, and this he delighted in emphasising. With all his faults he was not unamiable, and, whatever Dryden may have protested, he was certainly not dull. His seventeen plays, the greater number of which are comedies of manners, have both humour and invention. Perhaps the best of Shadwell's dramas is *The Virtuoso*, 1676, the most entertaining work of its class between Ben Jonson and Congreve.

Thomas Shadwell
From Dryden's "Miscellanies"

John Crowne (1645?–1705?) is said to have been the son of an Independent minister in Nova Scotia, who is also styled "Colonel" Crowne. He hated the rough life in America, and in order to escape from it he accepted "the formal and disgusting situation of being gentleman-usher to an old independent lady" in England. He soon grew tired of this drudgery, and having brought out with some success a tragi-comedy of *Juliana* in 1671, he took to the stage as a profession. Crowne was patronised by Lord Rochester from 1675 to 1677, but incurred the malignity of that nobleman, who endeavoured to ruin him. Crowne, however, was protected by the king, and for the next eight years was prosperous. The death of Charles II., who had his fatal apoplectic fit on the day when Crowne's best play, *Sir Courtly Nice*, was being finally rehearsed, was fatal to his fortunes; and, though he produced plays until 1698, Crowne disappears from sight after 1701. He was living in 1703, but probably died not long after; he was buried in St. Giles-in-the-Fields. He was called "Little Starch Johnny Crowne," from the "stiff, unalterable primness of his long cravat."

Elkanah Settle (1648–1724) was the son of Josias Settle, of Dunstable, where he was born on the 1st of February 1648. He was entered a commoner of Trinity College, Oxford, but left the university without taking a degree, and came to London to try and live by poetry. He was originally a Whig in politics. His first play, *Cambyses*, enjoyed considerable success in 1666, although not printed until 1671, and Settle was used by Rochester as a cat's-paw to annoy Dryden. In 1673, Settle "was a formidable rival to Mr. Dryden, and not only the town, but the university of Cambridge, was much divided in their opinions, and in both places the younger fry inclined to Elkanah," who published his *Empress of Morocco*, the earliest English play decorated with plates. In *Absalom and Achitophel* Dryden had his revenge, immortalising the fluent poetaster as Doeg, who

> "fagotted his notions as they fell,
> And, if they rhymed and rattled, all was well."

After the Revolution, Settle fell into disfavour at court, and at one time he had to enlist as a trooper. It is not known how he contrived to live. In 1691, however, he was appointed city poet, and returned to the stage, publishing a considerable number of

Three Scenes from Settle's "Empress of Morocco"

W. Dolle fe

plays. At the close of his life he was a servant in a booth at Bartholomew Fair, and positively wagged a serpent-tail in a Smithfield puppet-show, as a monster in a green leather suit of his own invention. Young wrote:—

> "Poor Elkanah, all other changes past,
> For bread, in Smithfield dragons hissed at last,
> Spit streams of fire to make the butchers gape."

After this final ignominy, Settle was admitted to the Charterhouse, where he died as a poor brother on the 12th of February 1724. "He was a man of tall stature, red face, and short black hair." He is the most amusing specimen of the poetaster, pure and simple, that English literature supplies us with.

Otway

Thomas Otway (1652–1685) was the son of the Rev. Humphrey Otway of Woolbeding in Sussex; he was born at Trotton on the 3rd of March 1652. He went to school at Winchester, and in 1669 passed as a commoner to Christ Church College, Oxford. He was in an idle, fashionable set at the university, and refused to enter holy orders, for which he had been prepared; he left Oxford, indeed, without taking a degree. He was very early attracted to the stage, on which he seems to have made a disastrous public appearance as early as 1671. For twelve months he was a cornet in a troop of horse. In 1675 we find Otway settled in London, and producing at the Duke's Theatre his first play, the tragedy of *Alcibiades*, in which Mrs. Barry appeared. No characters became the genius of this great actress so well as those which Otway wrote for her; and it is probable that from the first he was incurably infatuated with the beauty and rebellious vivacity of Mrs. Barry. In *Don Carlos* (1676), Otway achieved a popular success, and was recognised as a dangerous rival to Dryden himself. In 1677 he was engaged on translation from Racine and Molière, and in 1678 he is believed to have volunteered as a trooper, under the Duke of Monmouth, in the Low Countries. He returned to London after the peace of Nijmwegen, "ragged and starved, with his tattered garments full of vermin," although he had been promoted in

Thomas Otway

November to be a lieutenant. Otway now settled down again to the writing of plays, and 1680 is the year in which we find this most unlucky of poets in the highest comparative state of prosperity. It was then that he produced *The Orphan*, long esteemed as the very masterpiece of tragic pathos, and his rugged, faintly autobiographical poem, *The Poet's Complaint of his Muse.* It seems that in 1681 the "poor disbanded soldier" was again suffering from extreme poverty, from which he was temporarily relieved by the bounty of the Duchess of Portsmouth. To that lady he dedicated, in 1682, his *Venice Preserved*, which is, on the whole, the most meritorious production of the English drama during the period from 1660 to 1700. In this year, as is supposed, Otway made a final effort to secure the affections of Mrs. Barry; a collection of letters, addressed to this actress, was accidentally preserved, and published long after Otway's death. It appears that she discouraged him; he was, we can hardly doubt, no eligible suitor. Nothing was left to Otway but, he says, to "curse womankind for ever." During the last three years of Otway's life we know little of him, except that he was sunken in misery and besotted with drink, and that he produced one indifferent tragedy, *The Atheist* (1684). His latest work was his poem of *Windsor Forest*, 1685. His end was obscure and terrible. There is no reason to doubt that he died on the 14th of April 1685, but the exact circumstances are matters of conjecture. The accepted version of the story is that he ventured out of a sponging-house on Tower Hill, driven by the pangs of hunger, and begged of the passers-by. Seeing a gentleman of a more cultivated air than the rest, he called out, "I am Otway, the poet!" The person accosted, shocked to see so great a genius in so melancholy a position, gave him a guinea, upon which Otway rushed to the nearest baker's, and, ravenously swallowing a piece of bread, choked with it and died. According to another report, Otway died of fever. What is not doubtful is that he was reduced, at the age of only thirty-three, to conditions of the most abject poverty. No contemporary notice of his death has been discovered. In the whole chronicle of the miseries of genius there is no more melancholy story than that of the author of *Venice Preserved.*

Elizabeth Barry

From the Mezzotint by C. Knight after the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

FROM "VENICE PRESERVED."

Jaffier. Is this the Roman virtue? this the blood
That boasts its purity with Cato's daughter?
Would she have e'er betrayed her Brutus?
Belvidera. No!
For Brutus trusted her: wert thou so kind,
What would not Belvidera suffer for thee?
Jaffier. I shall undo myself, and tell thee all.
Belvidera. Look not upon me, as I am a woman,
But as a bone, thy wife, thy friend, who long
Has had admission to thy heart, and there
Studied the virtues of thy gallant nature;
Thy constancy, thy courage, and thy truth,
Have been my daily lesson: I have learnt them,
Am bold as thou, can suffer or despise
The worst of fates for thee; and with thee share them.
Jaffier. Oh, Thou divinest Power! look down and hear
My prayers! instruct me to reward this virtue!
Yet think a little, ere thou tempt me further;
Think I've a tale to tell will shake thy nature,
Melt all this boasted constancy thou talk'st of
Into vile tears and despicable sorrows:
Then if thou should'st betray me!
Belvidera. Shall I swear?
Jaffier. No, do not swear; I will not violate
Thy tender nature with so rude a bond;
But, as thou hop'st to see me live my days
And love thee long, lock this within thy breast;
I've bound myself by all the strictest sacraments,
Divine and human—
Belvidera. Speak!
Jaffier. To kill thy father—
Belvidera. My father!
Jaffier. Nay, the throats of the whole Senate
Shall bleed, my Belvidera! he amongst us
That spares his father, brother, or his friend,
Is damned! how rich and beauteous will the face
Of ruin look, when these wide streets run blood;
I and the glorious partners of my fortune
Shouting, and striding o'er the prostrate dead;
Still to new waste; whilst thou, far off in safety
Smiling, shall see the wonders of our daring;
And when night comes, with praise and love receive me.

Nathaniel Lee (1650?-1692), was probably the eldest son of Dr. Richard Lee, rector of Hatfield, where he was born about 1650. He was educated at Westminster, and was admitted a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, in July 1665. He took his degree in 1668, and soon after came up to London to live by the stage. He became an actor in 1672, and his first play, *Nero*, was produced in 1675. From this year to 1681 he enriched dramatic literature with eight tragedies of bombastic character, but singularly consistent and original in style. Soon after the latter date, *Lee*

Lee, who had always been excitable, began to show signs of definite mental derangement, but these were not severe enough to prevent him from combining with Dryden in writing *The Duke of Guise*, in 1683. In 1684, however, Lee became violently insane, and in November had to be confined in Bedlam, where he remained for more than four years, until he was discharged, cured, in 1689. He published two more tragedies, both, it is probable, written before his illness; but on a cold night early in the spring of 1692, returning home "overladen with wine," he fell down as he was passing through Clare Market, and was found dead in the morning, having been, as is supposed, stunned by his fall and stifled in the snow. He was buried on the 6th of May in the church of St. Clement's Danes. Two of Lee's tragedies, his *Theodosius* (1680) and his *Alexander the Great; or, The Rival Queens* (1677), remained stock-pieces long after every other tragical product of the Restoration theatre was obsolete, and the second of these did not go out of fashion for a century and a half.

Nathaniel Lee

From an Engraving after the Portrait by Dobson

A specimen of the conversation in the tragedy of *Gloriana* (1676) will give an idea of Lee's high-flown versification, and a typical instance of the English rhymed play:—

Gloriana (*aside*). Just Heaven does sure this god-like man provide
To bear me from the tyrant's lust and pride.
Beauty, if thou did'st ever, aid me now,
That I may make this haughty gazer bow—
This heavenly youth; oh! force him to adore,
To love me only, I'll ne'er ask thee more.
Cæsar (*aside*). Why beats my heart as I had poison ta'en?
What means my burning breast and giddy brain?
Swift thrilling cold with panic terror flies,
And an unusual thaw dissolves my eyes.
If Love thou art, I will not take the wound;
My armour shall thy pointed darts confound;
I'll draw them, if they cannot be withstood,
Though to the feathers, drinking in my blood,
Then shake them at her eyes with fixed disdain,
And hurl them to thy godhead back again.

Gloriana (*to Cæsar*). If you in fields have purchased high renown,
Have with persisting virtue wonders done,
And wreaths, rewards of toiling valour, won,
Now in a princess' quarrel lift your sword :
Fate never did a nobler cause afford.
By all the mighty battles you have fought,
By all the trophies you with blood have bought,
A royal suffering virgin's wrongs redress,
And kill the giant vice that would oppress !

Cæsar. I meet the summons swift and snatch the joy,
Kindling at death, and panting to destroy ;
Another sword like mine you'll ne'er employ.
War was my mistress, and I loved her long ;
She loved my music, shoutings were my song,
And clashing arms that echoed through the plain,
Neighings of horses, groans of dying men,
Notes which the trump and hoarser drum affords,
And dying sounds rising from falls of swords.
Command dispatch and bid your lightning fly !
I'll flash, I'll kill, I'll conquer in your eye,
And, after all, here yield my breath and die.

Revival of Prose

While we study the noble critical prefaces of Dryden we perceive that English prose has taken fresh forms and a new coherency. Among the many candidates for the praise of having reformed our wild and loose methods in prose, JOHN EVELYN seems to be the one who best deserves it. He was much the oldest of the new writers, and he was, perhaps, the very earliest to go deliberately to French models of brevity and grace. Early in the Commonwealth he was as familiar with La Motte le Vayer as with Aristotle ; he looked both ways and embraced all culture. Yet Evelyn is not a great writer ; he aims at more than he reaches. There is notable in his prose, as in the verse of Cowley, constant irregularity of workmanship, and a score of faults have to be atoned for by

John Evelyn
From an old Engraving

one startling beauty. Evelyn, therefore, is a pioneer; but the true artificers of modern English prose are a group of younger men of divers fortunes, all, strangely enough, born between 1628 and 1634. In genealogical order the names of the makers of modern style may be given thus —Temple, Barrow, Tillotson, Halifax, Dryden, Locke, and South.

Wotton House, Surrey

Evelyn

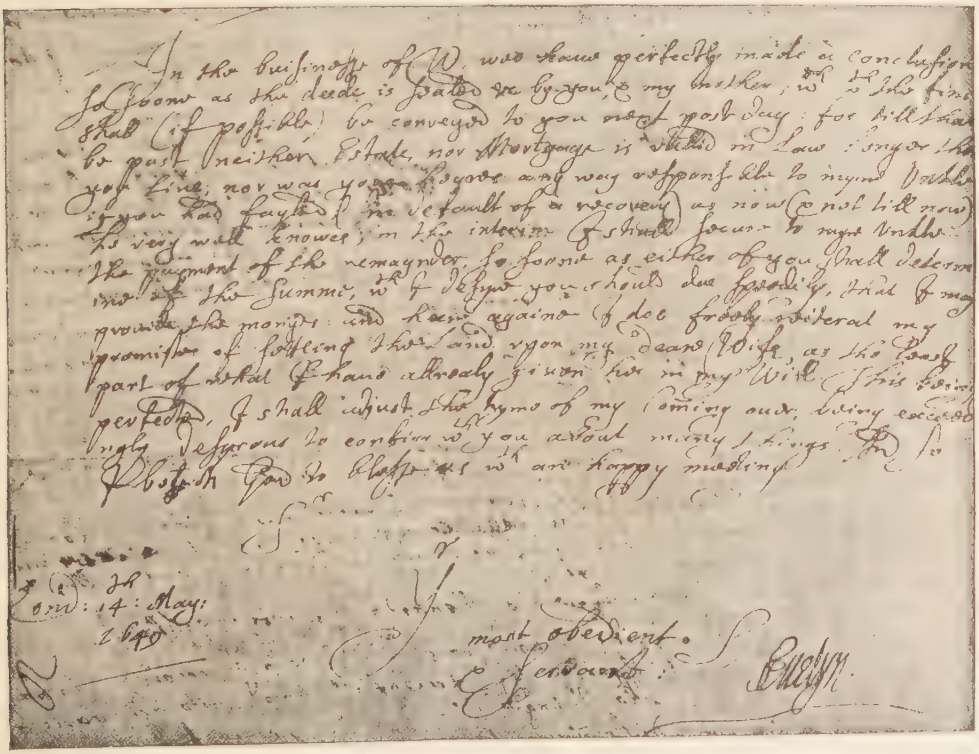
John Evelyn (1620–1706) was born at Wotton, in Surrey, on the 31st of October 1620, and was the son of Mr. Richard Evelyn, who in 1633 was High Sheriff of Surrey and Sussex. He was sent in 1625 to live with his grandmother at Lewes; in 1637 he entered Balliol College, Oxford, as a fellow-commoner. In 1643, after the death of his father, and after fighting for a while for the king, Evelyn started on the European Grand Tour, and did not return to England to live until 1647. His earliest work was a translation from La Motte le Vayer, *Of Liberty and Servitude* (1649). He lived abroad again for some years, and did not visit England until 1652, when he took a house at Deptford. At the Restoration, his scientific and literary energies awakened; he was one of those who started the Royal Society in 1661. His famous *Sylva* was published in 1664. The remainder of Evelyn's life was active and useful, and he served on a great number of committees. The death of his nephew in 1691 made him the master of Wotton, and he went there to reside in 1694. His latest publication was a volume on salads, *Acetaria* (1699). He died at Wotton on the 27th of February 1706, and was buried in the parish church. The *Diary* of John Evelyn, which is now his principal claim to recollection, was kept from the knowledge of the public until 1818, until Mrs. Evelyn of Wotton was persuaded to allow William Bray to edit it. It is an irregular and very picturesque chronicle of the events of Evelyn's life from 1641 to within three weeks of his death in 1706.

Wotton Church

FROM EVELYN'S "DIARY."

The Bantam, or East India Ambassadors, being invited to dine at Lord George Berkeley's (now Earl), I went to the entertainment to contemplate the exotic guests. They were both very hard-favoured, and much resembling in countenance some sort of monkeys. We eat at two tables, the Ambassadors and interpreter by themselves. Their garments were rich Indian silks, flowered with gold, *viz.* a close waistcoat to their knees, drawers, naked legs, and on their heads caps made like fruit-baskets. They wore poisoned daggers at their bosoms, the hafts carved with some ugly serpents' or devils' heads, exceeding keen, and of Damascus metal. They wore no sword. The second Ambassador (sent, it seems, to succeed in case the first should die by the way in so tedious a journey), having been at Mecca, wore a Turkish or Arab sash, a little part of the linen hanging down behind his neck, with some other difference of habit, and was half a negro, bare-legged and naked feet, and deemed a very holy man. They sate crossed-legged like Turks, and sometimes in the posture of apes and monkeys ; their nails and teeth as black as jet, and shining, which being the effect, as to their teeth, of perpetually chewing betel to preserve them from the tooth-ache, much raging in their country, is esteemed beautiful.

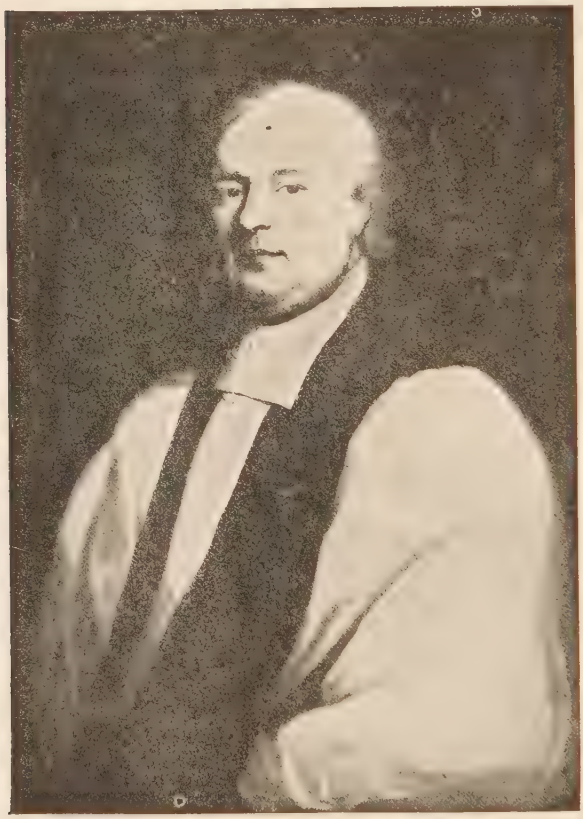
The first Ambassador was of an olive hue, a flat face, narrow eyes, squat nose, and Moorish lips, no hair appeared ; they wore several rings of silver, gold, and copper on their fingers, which was a token of knighthood or nobility. They were of Java Major, whose princes have been turned Mahomedans not above fifty years since ; the inhabitants are still pagans and idolaters. They seemed of a dull and heavy constitution, not wondering at any thing they saw ; but exceedingly astonished how our law gave us propriety in our estates, and so thinking we were all kings, for they could not be made to comprehend how subjects could possess any thing but at the pleasure of their Prince, they being all slaves ; they were pleased with the notion, and admired our happiness. They were very sober, and I believe subtle in their way.



Extract from an Autograph Letter of Evelyn

Tillotson

Among the pioneers of prose style, the tradition of the eighteenth century gave the first place to JOHN TILLOTSON, Archbishop of Canterbury, whose influence on his contemporaries, and particularly on Dryden, was supposed to be extreme. Later criticism has questioned the possibility of this; and, indeed, it can be demonstrated that until after he was raised to the primacy in 1691 the publications of Tillotson were scattered and few; he seemed to withdraw from notice behind the fame of such friends as Barrow and Wilkins. But it must not be forgotten that all this time Tillotson was preaching, and that as early as 1665 his sermons were accepted as the most popular of the age. The clergy, we are told, came to his Tuesday lectures "to form their minds," and, if so, young writers may well have attended them to form their style. The celebrated sweetness of Tillotson's character is reflected in his works, where the storms and passions of his career seem to have totally subsided. Urbanity and a balanced decorum are found throughout the serene and insinuating periods of this elegant latitudinarian. It is said of him that "there never was a son of absurdity that did not dislike, nor a sensible reader who did not approve his writings." He was a typical child of the Restoration, in that, not having very much to say, he was assiduous in saying what he had in the most graceful and intelligible manner possible.

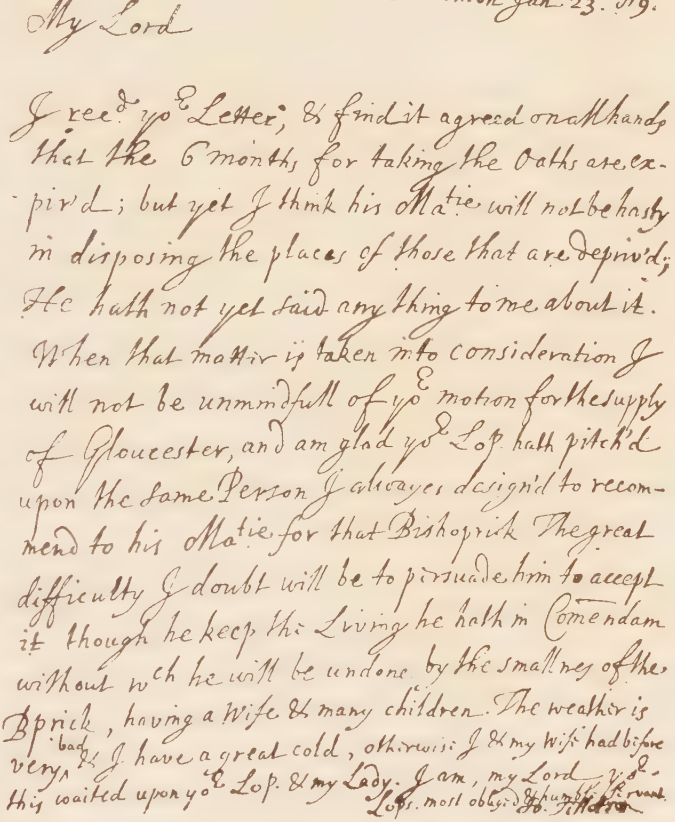


John Tillotson, D.D.

After the Portrait by Mrs. Beale

John Tillotson (1630–1694) was born at Haugh End, near Sowerby, in Yorkshire, about Michaelmas Day, 1630. His father, Robert Tillotson, a considerable clothier, who was a rigid Puritan, was particularly anxious that his son should remain staunch to Calvinist principles. The boy was therefore sent to Clare Hall, Cambridge, in 1647, to be under the Presbyterian divine, Dr. Clarkson. Tillotson was a fair, but not a brilliant scholar at the university; he became a fellow of his college in 1651. He had "always found something not agreeable to

the natural sweetness of his temper" in the Puritan doctrines, and his powers began to expand when the study of Chillingworth, about 1654, opened his eyes to a theology less narrow than that in which he had been bred. In 1660 he was ordained in London by the Scotch Bishop of Galloway, yet still adhered to the Presbyterians, and as a member of that body was ejected from his fellowship at Clare Hall. In 1661, however, Tillotson complied with the Act of Uniformity, and was appointed to a curacy at Cheshunt, in Herts. Two years later, a sermon that Tillotson happened to preach at St. Lawrence Jewry so delighted the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn, that they immediately appointed him resident preacher to their Society. He now became celebrated as a theological lecturer, introducing into preaching a more rational and decorous style of language and delivery than congregations had been used to from the Puritans. In 1664, Tillotson married Elizabeth French, the niece of Oliver Cromwell. He was suspected of still leaning towards the Dissenters; and, indeed, it was true that, until the very end of his life, Tillotson never ceased to hope that the schism in the churches might be healed. He was made Dean of Canterbury in 1672, in spite of his having given great offence at court by his sermons against Popery. In 1677, when the Prince and Princess of Orange were proceeding to Holland in great discomfort, and lacking some of the necessaries of life, Tillotson braved court opinion by entertaining them at his deanery, and facilitating their journey. In later years this act was not forgotten. For the next ten years his life was uneventful, except for the theological disputes in which the Dean was engaged; but when William III. came to the throne, his host at Canterbury was not overlooked. In 1690, on the deprivation of Sancroft, the king was importunate that Tillotson should become Primate; but the Dean was already unpopular with his fellow-clergy, and shrank from the ordeal of being lifted, in this almost unprecedented way, over the heads of all the English bishops. He hesitated



Edmonton Jan. 23. 89.

My Lord

I rec^d yo^r Letter, & find it agreed on all hands that the 6 months for taking the Oaths are expir'd; but yet I think his Ma^tie will not be hasty in disposing the places of those that are depriv'd; He hath not yet said any thing to me about it. When that matter is taken into consideration I will not be unmindfull of yo^r motion for the supply of Gloucester, and am glad yo^r Lop. hath pitch'd upon the same Person I always design'd to recommend to his Ma^tie for that Bishoprick The great difficulty I doubt will be to persuade him to accept it though he keep the Living he hath in Comendam without w^ch he will be undone by the smallness of the Bprick, having a Wife & many children. The weather is very bad & I have a great cold, otherwise I & my Wife had before this waited upon yo^r Lop. & my Lady. I am, my Lord yo^r Lops. most obliged & humble Servant J. Tillotson

Autograph Letter of Tillotson

long, from February 1690 to April 1691, when he at last consented to be nominated to the Archbishopric. As Primate, Tillotson enjoyed the closest favour, both of William III. and of Mary II., but continued unpopular among the clergy at large. On the 18th of November 1694, while preaching in Whitehall Chapel, Tillotson had a stroke of apoplexy, which he was able so far to suppress as not to interrupt the service. He died, however, on the fourth day after, and was buried in the church of St. Lawrence Jewry. William III. mourned his archbishop with sincerity; the king attributed "his safety on the throne, in a great measure, to his most loyal subject," Tillotson. Charm was the predominant feature of this eminent divine; he was graceful and handsome in figure and face, very blonde, with bushy brown hair and bright eyes. As a preacher, he was universally admitted to be the most eloquent of his generation, and, except on the subject of Papists, his delicate suavity never quitted him. His published writings are but his sermons enlarged and elaborated.

FROM TILLOTSON'S "SERMONS."

How often might a man, after he had jumbled a set of letters in a bag, fling them out upon the ground before they would fall into an exact poem, yea, or so much as make a good discourse in prose? And may not a little book be as easily made by chance as this great volume of the world? How long might a man be in sprinkling colours upon a canvas with a careless hand before they could happen to make the exact picture of a man? And is a man easier made by chance than his picture? How long might twenty thousand blind men, which should be sent out from the several remote parts of England, wander up and down before they would all meet upon Salisbury Plains, and fall into rank and file in the exact order of an army? And yet this is much more easy to be imagined than how the innumerable blind parts of matter should rendezvous themselves into a world.

Isaac Barrow

By the side of Tillotson, ISAAC BARROW appears ponderous and even long-winded. He belongs to the new school more by what he avoids than by what he attains. He was a man of great intellectual force, who, born into an age which was beginning to stigmatise certain faults in its predecessor, was able to escape those particular errors of false ornament and studied quaintness, but could not train his somewhat elephantine feet to dance on the tight-rope of delicate ease. The matter of Barrow is always solid and virile, and he has phrases of a delightful potency. In considering the place of the great divines in the movement of literature, it is to be borne in mind that sermons were now to a vast majority of auditors their principal intellectual pabulum. In days when there were no newspapers, no magazines, no public libraries, and no popular lectures, when knowledge was but sparsely distributed in large and costly books, all who were too decent to encounter the rough speech and lax morality of the theatre had no source of literary entertainment open to them except the churches. We groan nowadays under the infliction of a long sermon, but in the seventeenth century the preacher who stopped within the hour defrauded an eager audience of a pleasure. It is not necessary to suppose that with the decay of puritanical enthusiasm the appetite for listening to sermons came to an end. On the contrary, public taste became more eclectic, and a truly popular divine was more than ever besieged in his pulpit. To these conditions the preachers lent themselves, and those who had literary skill revelled in

opportunities which were soon to quit them for the essayist and the journalist. Nor was the orthodoxy of the hour so strenuous that it excluded a great deal of political and social allusion. Sermons and books of divinity were expected to entertain. There are few treatises of the age so lively as the religious pamphlets of the author of the *Whole Duty of Man*,[1] and it was an appreciator of the wicked wit of South who protested that his addresses should be called, not Sunday, but week-day sermons.

Isaac Barrow (1630–1677) was the son of King Charles I.'s linen-draper, Thomas Barrow. He was sent to school at the Charterhouse, where he principally distinguished himself by fighting his schoolfellows. His father was heard to say that "if it pleased God to take any of his children, he often solemnly wished it might be Isaac." But at school at Felsted he made great progress, and in 1645 he was removed to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he came under the influence of his uncle, Isaac Barrow, afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph. But the latter was ejected from his college of Peterhouse by the Puritans, and the family lost everything by adhering to the king's cause. The younger Isaac, however, continued to cling to Trinity, being in 1649 elected a fellow of that college; and before he was twenty-five he had gained a solid reputation as a Greek scholar and as a mathematician. In 1655, Barrow determined to see the world, and got as far as Asia Minor. On the voyage from Italy to Smyrna the ship was attacked by pirates from Algiers, and the future divine, taking charge of a gun, fought with the greatest determination until the enemy withdrew. Barrow has described the battle in Latin verse and prose. He lived more than a year in Constantinople, studying the writings of St. Chrysostom, and returned to England, after an absence of four years, by Venice—where he was nearly burned at sea—Germany and Holland in 1659. Barrow in 1660 was chosen without a competitor to be Greek professor at Cambridge, and in 1663 he was appointed the first Lucasian professor of mathematics at the same university. But as he found that "he could not make a Bible

Isaac Barrow

After the Portrait by Claude Lefebre

[1] The authorship of this famous book is still uncertain; but in 1884 Mr. C. E. Doble brought forward strong evidence to show that it, and its allied manuals, were written by Dr. Richard Allestree (1619–1681).

out of his Euclid, nor a pulpit out of his mathematical chair," he resigned the latter in 1669 in favour of his pupil, Isaac Newton, after publishing his *Lectiones Opticæ*, which Newton revised. For a while, Barrow was without definite employment, and a little out of temper with the world; but in 1672, Pearson being made Bishop of Chester, Barrow received the Mastership of Trinity. The king said that the post was given to Barrow as to "the best scholar in England." He held it only five years, for during a visit to London, where he was preaching the Passion sermon in the Guildhall, he died, after a very short illness, "in mean lodgings over a saddler's shop near

The Great Court and Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge

From a contemporary Print

Charing Cross," on the 4th of May 1677. Barrow was buried in Westminster Abbey. He was mourned as certainly the most learned man of his day; and when the range of Barrow's erudition is considered, in mathematics, optics, classical research, theology, and philosophy, the equipment of his mind was quite extraordinary, especially as he had only reached the age of forty-seven. He was a very fine preacher, but he had the defect of excessive length. Once, when he was preaching at Westminster Abbey, he continued speaking so long, that the vergers were forced at length to set the organs playing "till they had blowed him down." Some of his sermons are said to have been prepared for a delivery of over four hours each. A great many entertaining anecdotes are preserved of Barrow's habits in a memorial letter which Abraham Hill wrote to Tillotson. He was considered intemperate in the use of fruit and of tobacco. His theological works, four massive folios, were posthumously published in 1683–89, under the editorial care of Tillotson, to whom the MSS. were given by Barrow's father, who survived him until 1687.

FROM BARROW'S "PLEASANTNESS OF RELIGION."

Wisdom acquaints us with ourselves, our own temper and constitution, our propensions and passions, our habitudes and capacities; a thing not only of mighty advantage, but of infinite pleasure and content to us. No man in the world less knows a fool than himself; nay, he is more than ignorant, for he constantly errs in the point, taking himself for, and demeaning himself as, toward another, a better, a wiser, and abler man than he is. He hath wonderful conceits of his own qualities and faculties; he affects commendations incompetent to him; he soars at employment surpassing his ability to manage. No comedy can represent a mistake more odd and ridiculous than his: for he wanders, and stares, and hunts after, but never can find nor discern himself: but always encounters with a false shadow instead thereof, which he passionately hugs and admires. But a wise man, by constant observation and impartial reflection upon himself, grows very familiar with himself; he perceives his own inclinations, which, if bad, he strives to alter and correct; if good, he cherishes and corroborates them: he apprehends the matter he is fitting for, and capable to manage, neither too mean and unworthy of him, nor too high and difficult for him; and those applying his care to, he transacts easily, cheerfully, and successfully. So being neither puffed up with vain and over-weening opinion, nor dejected with heartless diffidence of himself, neither admiring nor despising; neither irksomely hating, nor fondly loving himself; he continues in good humour, maintains a sure friendship and fair correspondence with himself, and rejoices in the retirement and private conversation with his own thoughts: whence flows a pleasure and satisfaction inexpressible.

Tempe

From the rapid and luminous compositions of the divines, it was but a step to the masters of elegant mundane prose. Cruel commentators have conspired to prove that there was no subject on which Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE was so competent as to excuse the fluency with which he wrote about it. That the matter contained in the broad volumes of his *Works* is not of great extent or value must be conceded; but style does not live by matter only, and it is the bright modern note, the ease and grace, the rapidity and lucidity, that give to Temple his faint but perennial charm. He is the author, too, of one famous sentence, which may be quoted here, because it marks in a very clear way the movement of English prose. Let us listen to the cadence of these words:—

"When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over."

This is the modern manner of using English. It is divided by an abysm from the prose of the Commonwealth, and in writing such a sentence Temple showed himself nearer to the best authors of our living age than he was to such contemporaries of his own as Hobbes or Browne.

Sir William Temple (1628–1699), the son of Sir John Temple, was born in Blackfriars in 1628. He was educated at the rectory of Penshurst until 1638, and for the next five years at Bishop Stortford. After spending two years at home, "being hindered by the disorders of the time from going to the university," Temple entered Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1646. At college he gave his time mostly to acquiring French and Spanish, and early in 1647 began to travel. On his way to France, he met Miss Dorothy Osborn in the Isle of Wight, and engaged himself to her. Seven years later

they married, on Temple's return from the Continent. At the Restoration he was given employment in Ireland, and entered Parliament in 1661 as one of the members for County Carlow. Temple did so well in Ireland that he was entrusted, on his return to England in 1665, with diplomatic business in the Low Countries. With the exception of a brief period, during which he sulked at home at Sheen, the next twenty years of Temple's life were spent in active and capable diplomacy, mainly in Holland. His first published work of any importance was the *Observations upon the Netherlands*, of 1672. He was much annoyed at what he considered the king's ingratitude in striking his name out of the Privy Council in 1681, and he determined to retire from public life. He purchased a small estate, Moor Park, near Farnham, and to overtures from the king replied that he "would always live a good subject, but, whatever happened, would never enter again upon any public employment." He was much disturbed by the suicide of his son, who threw himself out of a boat in which he was shooting London Bridge in 1689, and in 1695, Lady Temple, a woman of extraordinary courage, wit, and charm, died also. In these last years Temple wrote much, and from 1689 to 1692, and again from 1696 to Temple's death, Jonathan Swift lived at Moor Park as his secretary and amanuensis. Swift edited Temple's Works (1700–1703), which were largely posthumous. The old diplomatist died on the 27th of January 1699, at Moor Park; his heart was buried in a silver box, under the sun-dial in his garden, and the rest of his body in Westminster Abbey. Swift wrote in his diary that there had died "with him all that was good and amiable among men."

Sir William Temple

After the Portrait by Sir Peter Lely

FROM TEMPLE'S "ESSAYS."

The perfectest figure of a garden I ever saw, either at home or abroad, was that of Moor Park, in Hertfordshire, when I knew it about thirty years ago. It was made by the Countess of Bedford, esteemed among the greatest wits of her time, and celebrated by Doctor Donne: and with very great care, excellent contrivance, and much cost.

Because I take the garden I have named to have been in all kinds the most beautiful and perfect, at least in the figure and disposition, that I have ever seen, I will describe it for a model to those that meet with such a situation, and are above the regards of common expense. It lies on the side of a hill (upon which the house stands), but not very steep. The length of the house, where the best rooms and of most use or pleasure are, lies upon

the breadth of the garden, the great parlour opens into the middle of a terras gravel-walk that lies even with it, and which may be, as I remember, about three hundred paces long, and broad in proportion; the border set with standard laurels, and at large distances, which have the beauty of orange-trees out of flower and fruit: from this walk are three descents by many stone steps, in the middle and at each end, into a very large parterre. This is divided into quarters by gravel walks, and adorned with two fountains and eight statues in the several quarters; at the end of the terras walk are two summer-houses, and the sides of the parterre are ranged with two large cloisters, open to the garden, upon arches of stone, and ending with two other summer-houses even with the cloisters, which are paved with stone, and designed for walks of shade, there being none other in the whole parterre. Over these two cloisters are two terrasses covered with lead, and fenced with balusters; and the passage into these airy walks is out of the two summer-houses, at the end of the first terras-walk. The cloister facing the south is covered with vines, and would have been proper for an orange-house, and the other for myrtles, or other more common greens; and had, I doubt not, been cast for that purpose, if this piece of gardening had been then in as much vogue as it is now.

Halifax

Of all those, however, who contrived to clarify and civilise the prose of the Restoration, and to make it a vehicle for gentle irony and sparkling humour, the most notable was "Jotham, of piercing wit and pregnant thought." There exists some tiresome doubt about the bibliography of the Marquis of HALIFAX, for his anonymous miscellanies were not collected until he had been five years dead. But no one questions the authenticity of *Advice to a Daughter;* and if internal evidence, proof by style and temper, are worth anything at all, they must confirm the tradition that it is to the same pen we owe the *Character of a Trimmer* and the *Anatomy of an Equivalent.* In these ironic tracts, so adroit, so grave, so graceful, we find ourselves far indeed from the storm and turmoil of the Commonwealth. In Halifax we see the best and most sympathetic side of the Restoration, its conservative scepticism, its reserve, its urbane and moderate virtue. In a letter to Cotton, Halifax confesses that his favourite reading had always been Montaigne, and he is a link between that delicious essayist and the *Spectators* and *Tatlers* of a later age.

George Savile, Marquis of Halifax

George Savile, first Marquis of **Halifax** (1633–1695) was the son of Sir William Savile, of Thornhill, in Yorkshire, and his wife, Anne Coventry. He was born on the 11th of November 1633. Sir William Savile fought in the Civil Wars, and when he died in 1644, he left his children to the care of his young wife, who had a genius for political intrigue. In consequence of his long minority and his mother's care, Sir George found himself a wealthy man. In 1656 he married

Lady Dorothy Spencer, the daughter of Waller's Sacharissa. In 1660 he represented Pontefract in the Convention Parliament which arranged for the Restoration, but his career in the House was brief. About this time his great interest in naval matters began, and was greatly encouraged by the Dutch War. On New Year's Day, 1668, he was raised to the peerage as Baron Savile and Viscount Halifax, and made Commissioner of Trade in 1669. His first wife died in 1670, and in 1672 he married again, Gertrude Pierrepoint, a famous beauty. For many years Halifax continued to exercise a preponderating influence in the House of Lords, where, according to Burnet, he was one of the four strong politicians of the age. In 1679 he became paramount in the Privy Council, and rose rapidly in the royal favour. "He studied," we are told, "to manage the king's spirit by his lively and libertine conversation." In 1680 he retired from politics for some months to his seat at Rufford. In 1681 he returned to London, and strongly supported the Government, becoming Lord Privy Seal in 1682; this was the first office Halifax had held, and about the same time he was created a Marquis. His influence in political life continued to be solid until the death of Charles II., but James II. excluded him from the Privy Council, of which Halifax was now President. He continued to be in disgrace at court until 1688. He turned his thoughts to literature, and to this period of retreat belong, in their final form, his most celebrated treatises, *The Character of a Trimmer* (which had been circulated in MS. at the end of 1684 or at the beginning of 1685), *The Anatomy of an Equivalent*, and *Advice to a Daughter*, all of them anonymously printed in 1688. After the flight of James II., Halifax consented to invite the Prince of Orange to take the throne, and he was the prime mover in the proclamation of William and Mary as king and queen. He was in office, as Lord Privy Seal, for a year, but retired in 1690, and remained in opposition until his death. He died very suddenly, after eating rather heavily of a roasted pullet, not without some suspicion of poison, on the 5th of April 1695, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The miscellaneous writings of Halifax were first collected and published under his own name in 1700.

From "Advice to a Daughter."

Avoid being the first in fixing a hard censure, let it be confirmed by the general voice, before you give into it; neither are you then to give sentence like a magistrate, or as if you had a special authority to bestow a good or ill name at your discretion. Do not dwell too long upon a weak side, touch and go away; take pleasure to stay longer when you can commend, like bees that fix only upon those herbs out of which they may extract the juice of which their honey is composed. A virtue stuck with bristles is too rough for this age; it must be adorned with some flowers, or else it will be unwillingly entertained; so that even where it may be fit to strike, do it like a lady, gently; and assure yourself, that where you care to do it, you will wound others more, and hurt yourself less, by soft strokes, than by being harsh or violent.

The triumph of wit is to make your good nature subdue your censure; to be quick in seeing faults, and slow in exposing them. You are to consider, that the invisible thing called a good name, is made up of the breath of good numbers that speak well of you; so that if by a disobliging word you silence the meanest, the gale will be less strong which is to bear up your esteem. And though nothing is so vain as the eager pursuit of empty applause, yet to be well thought of and to be kindly used by the world, is like a glory about a woman's head; 'tis a perfume she carrieth about with her, and leaveth wherever she goeth; 'tis a charm against ill-will. Malice may empty her quiver, but cannot wound; the dirt will not stick, the jests will not take; without the consent of the world a scandal doth not go deep; it is only a slight stroke upon the injured party, and returneth with greater force upon those that gave it.

It was characteristic of the new age, anxious to fix the grounds of opinion and base thought in each province exactly, that it should turn to the phenomena of the human mind and inquire into the sources of knowledge. This work fell particularly to the share of that candid and independent philosopher JOHN LOCKE, and the celebrated *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding* (1690), in which he elaborates the thesis that all knowledge is derived from experience, marks a crisis in psychological literature. Locke derived all our ideas from sensation and reflection, believing the mind to be a passive recipient of simple ideas, which it cannot in the first instance create, but can retain, and can so modify and multiply as to form that infinity of complex ideas which we call the Understanding. In short, he protested against the intuitionist doctrine of "innate notions" being brought into the world by the soul at birth. Where Locke's method and teaching, however, were peculiarly useful was in their admirable challenge to those pedantic assumptions and baseless propositions which had up to his time disturbed philosophy. Locke refuses to parley with the obscurities of the schools, and he sits bravely in the dry and searching light of science.

Locke

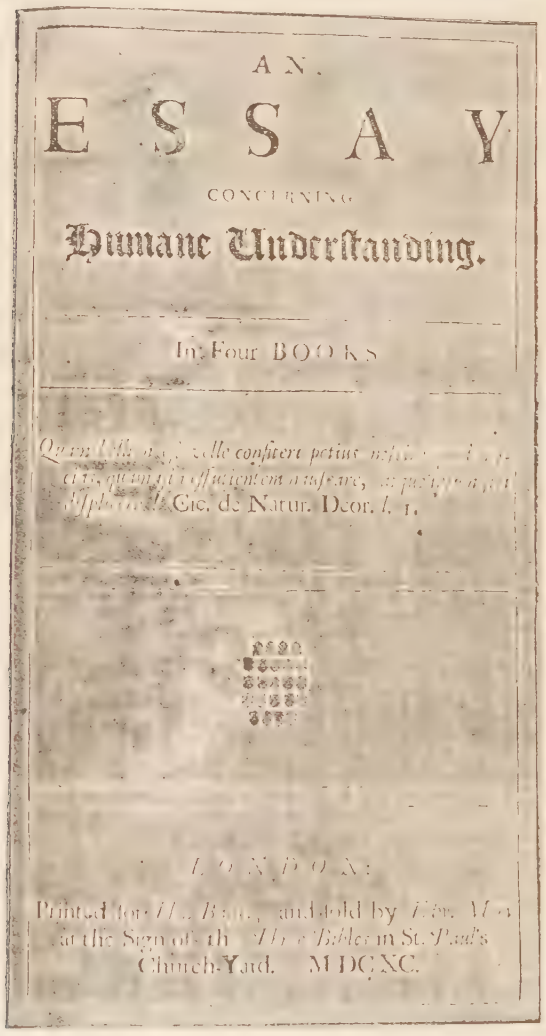
John Locke

After the Portrait by T. Burrower

Locke's contributions to theology are marked by the same intense determination to arrive at truth, and he was accused of having been the unconscious father of the deists. But, in fact, in religion, as in philosophy, his attitude is not so much sceptical as scrupulous. He ardently desires to get rid of the dubious and the non-essential. His candour is not less displayed in his tractates on education and government. Everywhere Locke is the embodiment of enlightened common-sense, toleration, and clairvoyance. He laid his hand on the jarring chords of the seventeenth century, and sought to calm and tune them, and in temperament, as in influence, he was the inaugurator of a new age of thought and feeling. He was the most

liberally-minded man of his time, and in his modesty, candour, and charity, no less than in the astounding reverberations caused by his quiet philosophical utterances, Locke reminds us of Charles Darwin. As a writer he is not favourably represented by the *Essay*, which is arid in form, and at no time was he in possession of an attractive style; but in some of his more familiar treatises we see how lucid and simple he could be at his best, and how completely he had exchanged the ornate manner of the Commonwealth for a prose that was competent to deal with plain matters of fact.

John Locke (1632–1704), the son of a country attorney of the same name, was born at Wrington, near Bristol, on the 29th of August 1632. The elder John Locke joined the Parliamentarian party in 1642, as the captain of a troop of horse. His son went to Westminster in 1646, and to Christ Church College, Oxford, in 1652. Locke early began to reflect upon philosophy, and to prepare for his life's work. In 1660 he was appointed Greek lecturer at his college, and in 1661 the deaths of his father and his only brother left him alone in the world. He held in succession various offices at the university, and in 1665 he travelled in Germany. During the next year he met accidentally the famous Lord Ashley (afterwards the first Earl of Shaftesbury), with whom he formed an instant friendship—"if my lord was pleased with the company of Mr. Locke, Mr. Locke was yet more so with that of my Lord Ashley." This was an epoch in the life of the philosopher, who shortly afterwards took up his residence with Lord Ashley, and became a recognised member of his family. It is believed that Lord Ashley urged Locke to put down his reflections on paper, and that it is to him that we owe the early writings of the philosopher. He published nothing, however, until twenty years later than this. In June 1668, he removed a tumour in Lord Ashley's chest, which was threatening his life; a little later he went round the country

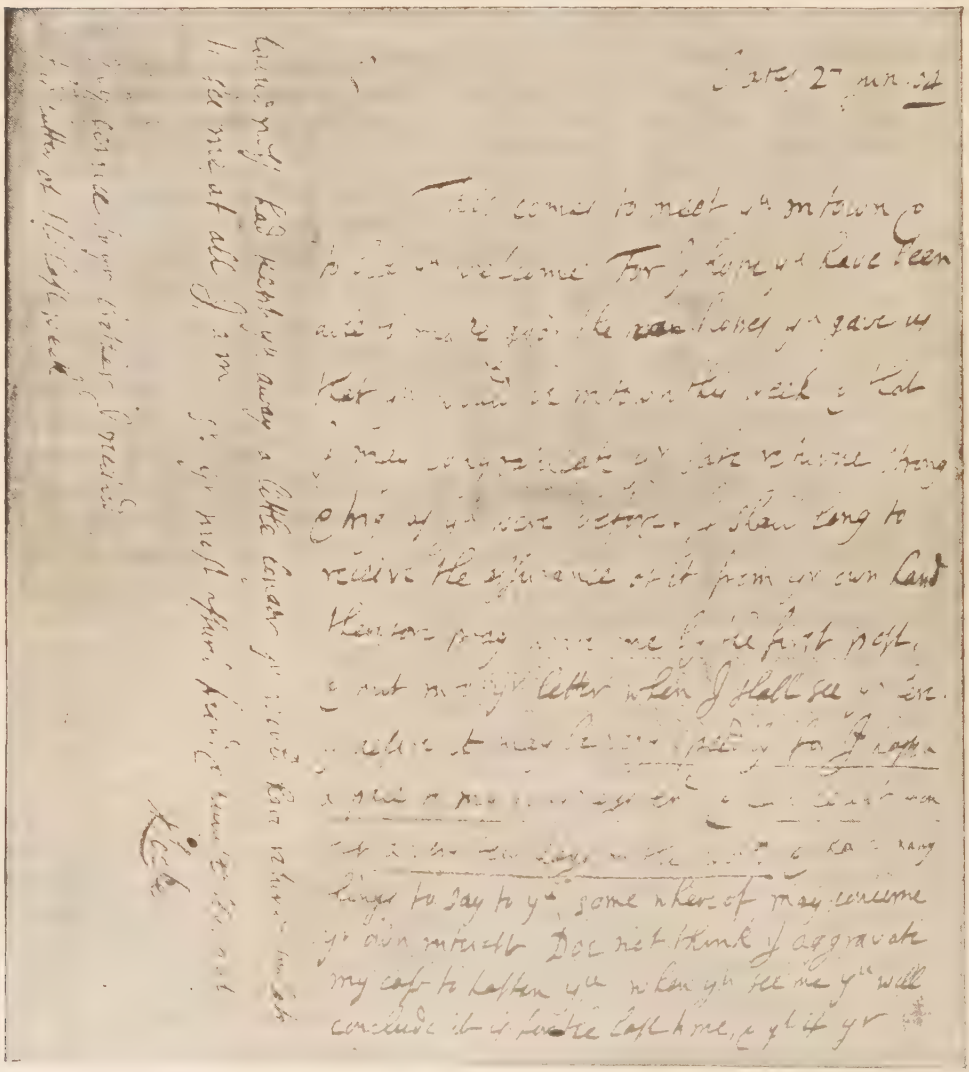

AN
ESSAY
CONCERNING
Humane Understanding.
In Four BOOKS
LONDON:
Printed for
and sold by
at the Sign of the
in St. Paul's
Church-Yard. MDCXC.

Title-page of Locke's Essay

to search for a wife for young Anthony Ashley; in 1671 he attended Lady Dorothy Ashley, and helped to bring into the world the child who became famous as the third Earl of Shaftesbury. In short, as the latter says, "all was thrown upon Mr. Locke," who was factotum to the family. All this time, however, although Locke was immersed in medical studies, he was not a qualified practitioner, nor did he ever proceed beyond Bachelor of Medicine. As Ashley rose to the highest offices in the state, Locke's responsibilities and emoluments increased; at one time the colony of Carolina was wholly under his charge (1670), and after Shaftesbury (as Ashley became in 1672) was made Lord High Chancellor of England, Locke administered his ecclesiastical patronage. But when Shaftesbury fell, Locke "shared with him in dangers, as before in honours and advantages," retaining, however, after the fall of his patron, the nominal post of Secretary to the Board of Trade, which Shaftesbury had secured for him in 1673. As, however, his salary was never paid, he was glad to resign this office in 1675. His health was now giving him anxiety, and in November of that year he left England to settle at Montpellier, which he left for Paris in 1677. He travelled considerably in France, and did not return to England until 1679, when Shaftesbury was restored for a short time to power. During the events which led to Shaftesbury's indictment and flight, Locke lived "a very cunning and unintelligible life," but after his master's fall, settled quietly in Oxford, and then retired to his family estate in Somersetshire. In the autumn of 1683 he seems to have thought it necessary to escape to Holland, where he began to plan his essay on the Human Understanding. During his absence, he was expelled from his studentship at Christ Church College. He lived an obscure and inconvenient life, sometimes in considerable danger, until 1689, when he was able to return to England. In 1690 he published his *Essay* in folio form, and an English version of his *Epistola de Tolerantia* in 1689. He thus, at the age of nearly sixty, began his literary career, and now proceeded to publish abundantly. These early works, which attracted a great deal of controversial interest, were strictly anonymous. Locke settled at first in Westminster, where, however, his delicate chest suffered seriously from the fog (*malignus fumus*) of the town. The death of Shaftesbury had almost coincided with the formation of Locke's other great life-intimacy, that with Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham, whom he had known before he left for Holland. He was in 1691 persuaded to make Oates, Sir Francis Masham's manor-house at High Laver, his home. Retreating to this quiet place, Locke devoted himself for the next five years with astonishing energy to literary work, but after this was drawn more and more into practical administration. He was a member of the Council of Trade from 1696 to 1700, and carried out many important reforms. After the latter year he

Oates, the Residence of John Locke

retired from public life, and lived mainly at Oates, surrounded by a devoted affection and friendship, in active mental employment, and here he resisted as well as he could his increasing weakness of body. He remained cheerful, but, as he said, "the dissolution of the cottage was not far off." On the 28th of October 1704, Locke died peacefully in the arms of Lady Masham, who had for so many years been like a daughter to him. He was buried in the churchyard of High Laver, under a sententious Latin epitaph composed by himself. His posthumous writings were collected in 1706. His work consists of a series of treatises on psychology, religion, education, government, and finance, each bearing a close relation to the others, and all in combination having exercised a remarkable influence on the progress and civilisation of Europe. It has been observed that, to give a just idea of the influence of Locke, it would be necessary to write the history of philosophy from his time to our own.



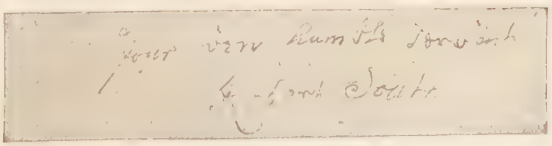
Autograph Letter of Locke

FROM THE "ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING."

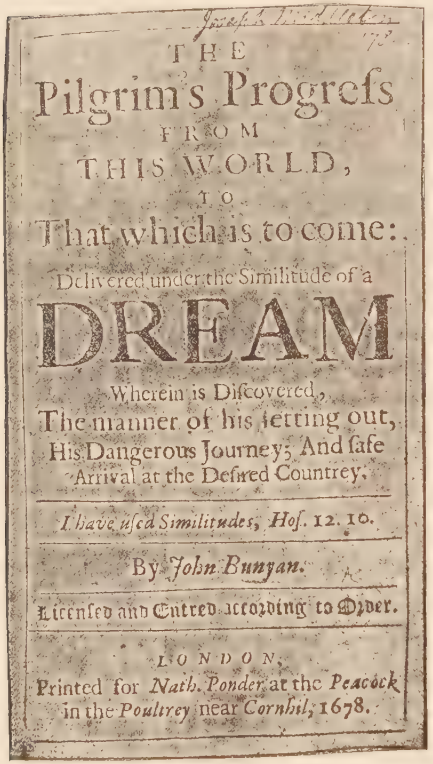
To those who are willing to get rid of this great hindrance of knowledge—for to such only I write—to those who would shake off this great and dangerous impostor Prejudice, who dresses up falsehood in the likeness of truth, and so dexterously hoodwinks men's minds, as to keep them in the dark, with a belief that they are more in the light than any that do not see with their eyes, I shall offer this one mark whereby prejudice may be known. He that is strongly of any opinion, must suppose—unless he be self-condemned—that his persuasion is built upon good grounds, and that his assent is no greater than what the evidence of the truth he holds forces him to; and that they are arguments, and not inclinations or fancy, that make him so confident and positive in his tenets. Now if, after all his profession, he cannot bear any opposition to his opinion, if he cannot so much as give a patient hearing, much less examine and weigh the arguments on the other side, does he not plainly confess it is prejudice governs him? And it is not evidence of truth, but some lazy anticipation, some beloved presumption, that he desires to rest undisturbed in. For if what he holds be as he gives out, well fenced with evidence, and he sees it to be true, what need he fear to put it to the proof. If his opinion be settled upon a firm foundation, if the arguments that support it, and have obtained his assent, be clear, good, and convincing, why should he be shy to have it tried whether they be proof or not? He whose assent goes beyond his evidence, owes this excess of his adherence only to prejudice, and does, in effect, own it when he refuses to hear what is offered against it; declaring thereby, that it is not evidence he seeks, but the quiet enjoyment of the opinion he is fond of, with a forward condemnation of all that may stand in opposition to it, unheard and unexamined.

South

The "witty" Dr. **Robert South** (1634–1716) was the son of William South, a wealthy London merchant, in whose house in Hackney the future divine was born on the 4th of September 1634. That the boy was precocious and daring is shown from the anecdote that, on the day when Charles I. was executed, South, whose turn it was to read the Latin prayers in Westminster School, took occasion to pray for the king by name. He was a prime favourite with the formidable Dr. Busby, who sent him, an advanced scholar, to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1651. South entered into holy orders in 1658, being privately ordained by one of the deprived Bishops, and in 1660 he was elected Public Orator to his university. His promotion in the Church was steady and rapid. In 1676 he was sent on an embassage to Poland, where he saw much to gratify "his naturally curious and inquisitive temper." In 1678 South received the valuable rectory of Islip, where, and at Caversham, he resided, wealthy, much respected, and intellectually active, for many years. In 1685 he refused an Irish archbishopric. He was so much excited



by Monmouth's rebellion, that he threatened to change his black cassock for a buff coat, and take his share of the fighting. South was repeatedly offered deaneries and bishoprics, but refused to be disturbed in his three neighbouring haunts—Christ Church, Oxford, the rectory of Islip, and his paternal estate at Caversham. He enjoyed the friendship of successive Earls of Clarendon, and later on that of the Earl of Arran. A few days before his death he carried the election of the latter for High Steward of Westminster by exhorting the prebendaries, from his bed, to vote "Heart and hand for my Lord Arran!" South died at Westminster, where he was a prebendary, in his eighty-fourth year, on the 8th of July 1716, and was buried with great solemnity in Westminster Abbey. He was as much dreaded as admired for his "unrestrained acrimony of temper and boundless severity of language, mixed with the lowest and falsest, as well as the truest wit." This was Tillotson's opinion, who was peculiarly opposed to South, but the judgment seems an accurate one. The rector of Islip is described as a man of smart and ready humour, who never spared his audience, who railed at his opponents and laughed at his friends, yet who was nevertheless no buffoon, but a man of genuine piety and scholarship. South's sermons were greatly enjoyed for a couple of generations and then neglected.


THE
Pilgrim's Progress
FROM
THIS WORLD,
TO
That which is to come:
Delivered under the Similitude of a
DREAM
Wherein is Discovered,
The manner of his setting out,
His Dangerous Journey; And safe
Arrival at the Desired Country.
I have used Similitudes, Hos. 12. 10.
By *John Bunyan.*
Licensed and Entred according to Order.
LONDON,
Printed for *Nath. Ponder* at the *Peacock*
in the *Poultrey* near *Cornhil*, 1678.

Title-page of First Edition of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," 1678

Thomas Burnet

Thomas Burnet (1635?–1715) was of Scotch descent, but born at Croft in Yorkshire. He was educated at the free school of Northallerton, and proceeded in 1651 to Clair Hall, Cambridge, where Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, was his tutor. Burnet said that he owed to this famous man "that free, generous, noble way of thinking" which it was his pride to cultivate. When, in 1654, Cudworth moved over to Christ's College, Burnet went with him, and three years later was elected a fellow of that college. He published, in Latin, in 1680, and in English in 1684, his *Telluris Theoria Sacra*, which he completed with the *De Conflagratione Mundi* in both languages in 1689. In 1699 Addison addressed a Latin ode to Burnet, who, from 1685 to his death on the 27th of September 1715, was Master of the Charterhouse, and who steered that great school with courage and skill through perilous political waters. His *Sacred Theory of the Earth* is a pro-geological dream of the mode in which our globe rose out of the chaos of the

Deluge, which had so nearly wrecked it. But he may be allowed to state his thesis in his own words:—

> "The substance of the theory is this: that there was a primitive earth of another form than the present, and inhabited by mankind till the Deluge; that it had those properties and conditions that we have ascribed to it, namely, a perpetual equinox or spring, by reason of its right situation to the sun; was of an oval figure, and the exterior face of it smooth and uniform, without mountains or a sea. That in this earth stood Paradise; the doctrine whereof cannot be understood, but upon supposition of this primitive earth, and its properties. Then that the disruption and fall of this earth into the abyss that lay under it, was that which made the Universal Deluge, and the destruction of the Old World; and that neither Noah's Flood, nor the present form of the Earth can be explained by any other method that is rational, nor by any other causes that are intelligible, at least, that have hitherto been proposed to the world."

Popular Prose

We dwell, more or less lovingly, on these names of the precursors of a modern prose, yet not one of them, not Halifax, not Tillotson, not Temple, survives as the author of any book now generally read by the larger public. Even the *Prefaces* of Dryden, it must regretfully be admitted, are no longer familiar to any but literary readers. The Restoration prose most effectively appreciated by the masses, and still alive on the shelves of the booksellers, is that of writers never recognised at all by the polite criticism of their own day. In a country bookshop you shall no longer happen upon the *Sacred Theory of the Earth* or upon *Public Employment preferred to Solitude*, but you shall upon Pepys' *Diary* and the *Pilgrim's Progress* and *A Call to the Unconverted*.

Bunyan's Dream

From Frontispiece to Fourth Edition "Pilgrim's Progress," 1680

These works do not stand on the same or even on neighbouring levels of literary merit; but they have this in common, that neither Baxter nor Bunyan nor Pepys set any value on literature, or concerned himself at all with the form under which he transmitted his ideas. There was this difference, however, that while Bunyan was unconsciously a consummate artist and a man instinct with imagination, the other two impress us solely by the

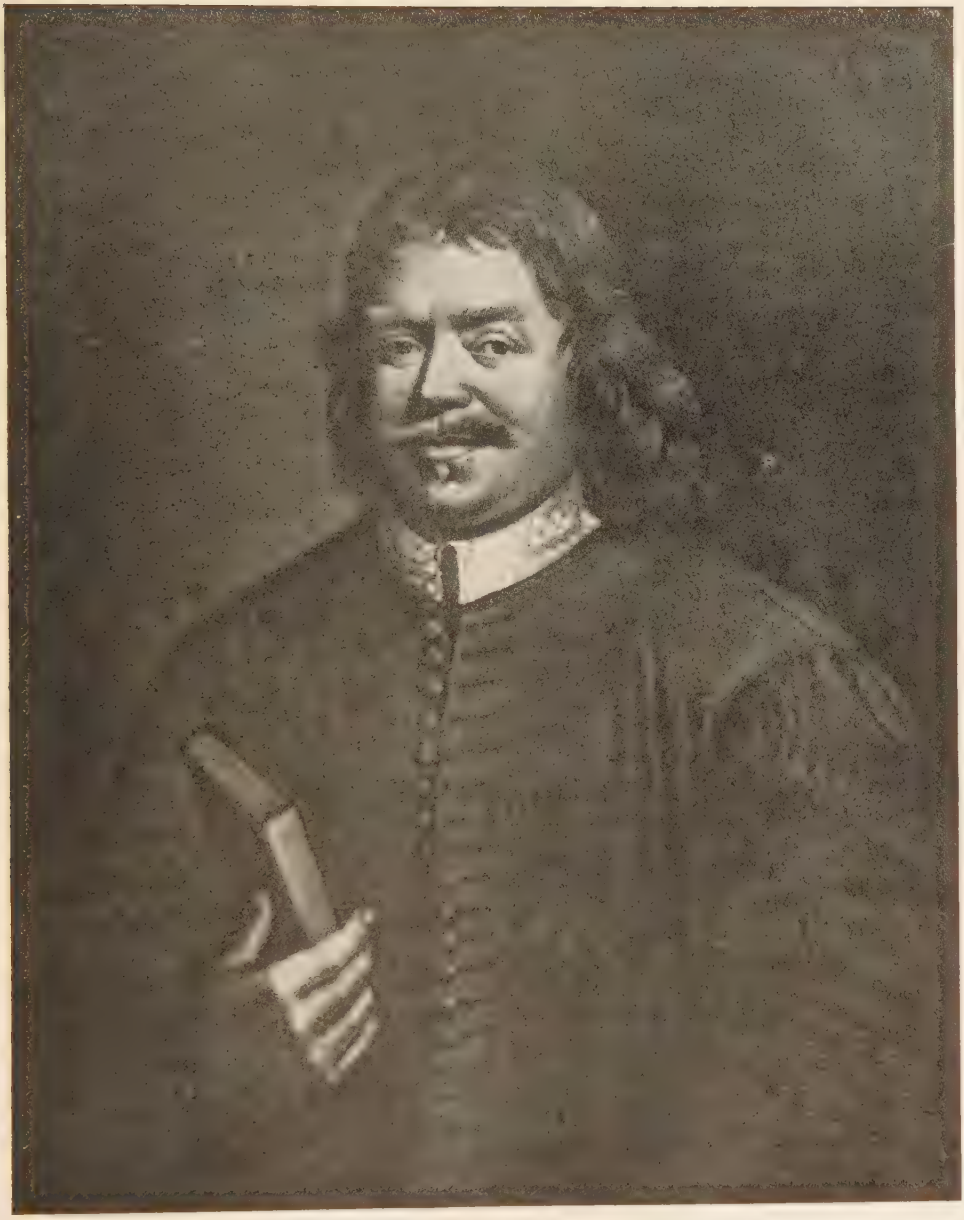
striking quality of the narrative, or the exhortations which they impart in the first words that occur to them. It is to JOHN BUNYAN, therefore, that our attention must here for a moment be given. Like Milton, he was an anachronism in the age of Charles II., and we observe with surprise that it was in an epoch of criticism, of reason, of combined experimental eclecticism, that two isolated men of genius put forth, the one an epic poem, the other a couple of religious allegories, steeped in the purest and most ideal

Bunyan's Meeting-House at Southwark

romance, and each unrivalled in its own class throughout other and more propitious ages of English literature. Nor, though the simple, racy compositions of Bunyan may not seem to have had any very direct influence on literature of the more academic kind, has the stimulus of his best books on humble minds ceased ever since, but has kept the language of the poor always hardy and picturesque, with scarcely less instant benefit than the Bible itself. Whether these narratives, and, most of all, the *Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, had not a direct influence on the realistic novels of the middle of the following century, is a question which criticism has scarcely decided ; but that they prepared the minds of the readers of those novels is beyond all doubt.

Bunyan

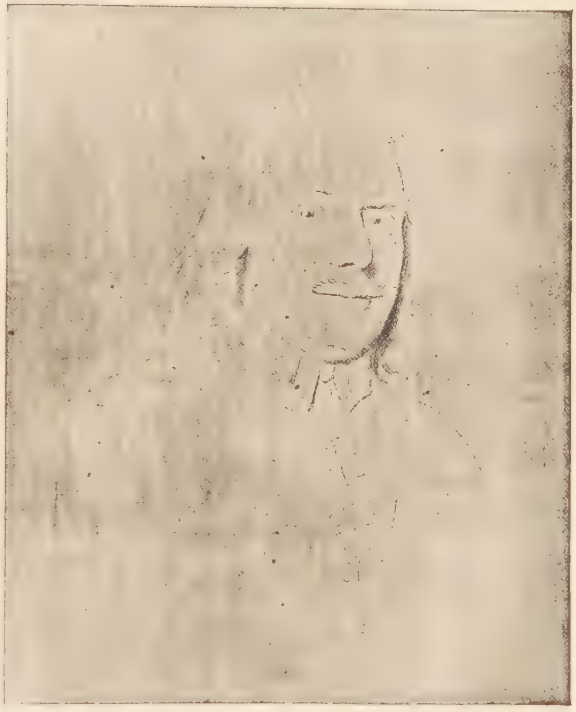
John Bunyan (1628–1688) was the son of a tinker or brazier at Elstow, in Bedfordshire, where he was born in November 1628. "I was of a low and inconsider-



John Bunyan.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY SADLER.

able generation," he says, "and never went to school to Aristotle or Plato, but was brought up in my father's house in a very mean condition, among a company of poor countrymen." He attended, however, the grammar school at Bedford. From early childhood Bunyan was afflicted "with apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits," and trembled "at the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell-fire." After his brief schooling, he was brought up to his father's trade of a tinker. He was not definitely religious in his youth, but he was always sensitive to serious impressions; and there is no question that, looking back long afterwards, he greatly exaggerated the sinfulness of his unconverted days. He became a soldier in the Civil War, and, though this is not absolutely certain, probably fought on the Parliamentarian side. He married the daughter of a godly man. "We came together," he says, "as poor as poor might be, not having so much as a dish or a spoon between us." Presently, under conditions which he has detailed with extraordinary vividness, he fell under conviction of sin, and became extremely miserable; at length unbending himself to some pious women in Bedford, who recommended him to the minister of the Baptist Church there, John Gifford. After violent convulsions of doubt and revolt, Bunyan had a "strange apprehension of the grace of God," and his conversion was completed. After this, we find him in good position in his old trade of brazier or kettle-maker, and in 1655 he was emboldened, though "in fear and trembling," to take a part in the Baptist ministry. He preached principally in the open air, on commons or in cleared spaces in copses, and he quickly became celebrated for the fervour of his awakening eloquence. At the Restoration, however, the Nonconformists found themselves forbidden to use their forms of worship, and all such meetings as those at which Bunyan preached were prohibited. It speaks much for the reputation which he had gained as a preacher, that he appears to have been the first Dissenter to be subjected to the penalty. He was preaching at Samsell, near Harlington, on the 12th of November 1660, when the constables entered the chapel and arrested him; he had been warned, but disdained to notice the threat. After an inquiry, he was thrown into Bedford jail, and long remained there. It is only just to those who tried the case of Bunyan, and

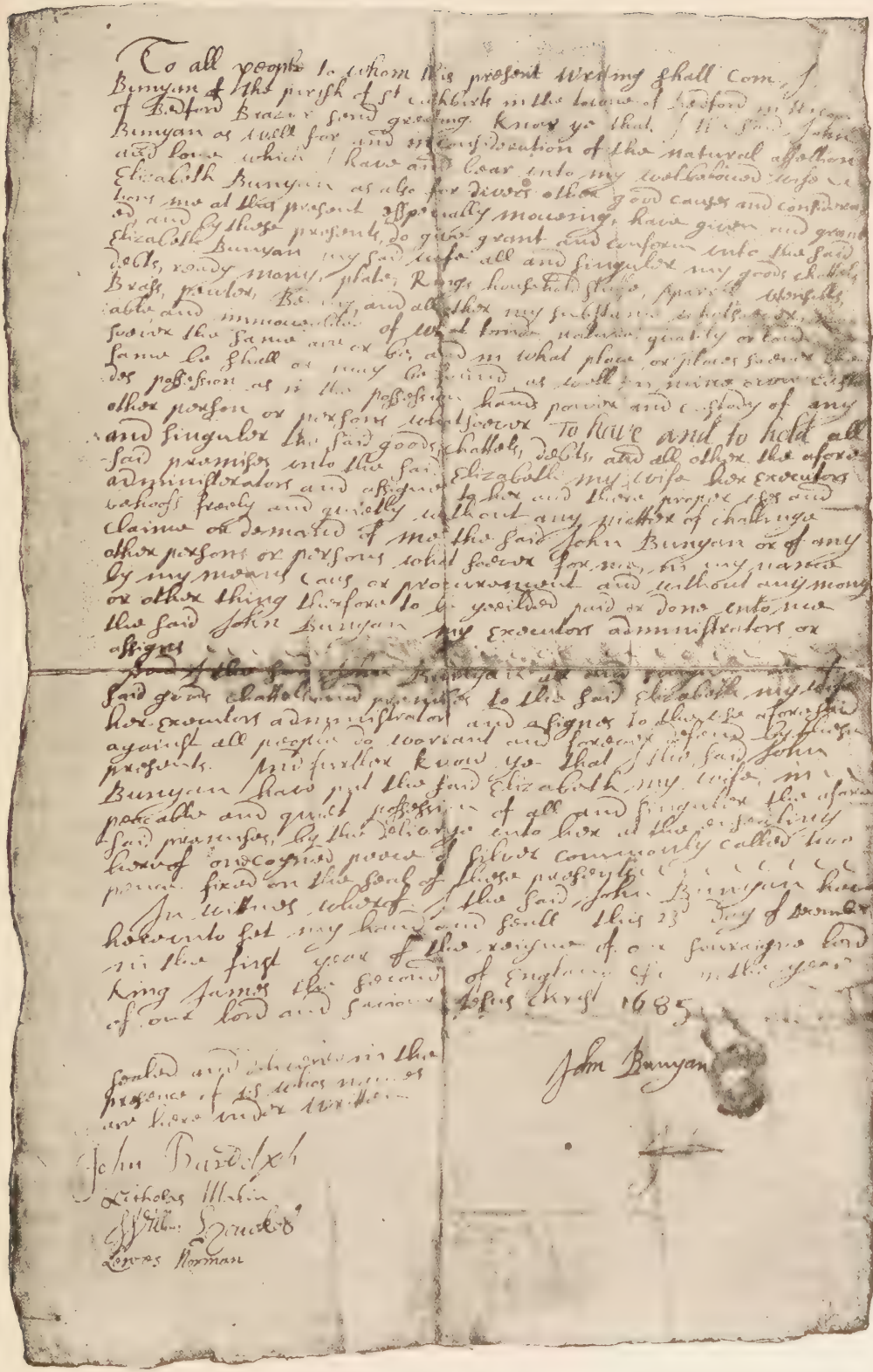


John Bunyan

From the Original Drawing by R. White

Sir Matthew Hale himself was among them, to say that they were ready to leave every loophole open for him to escape, but that he would accept no release which was not a public admission of his right to continue his evangelical work. This, with Charles II. on the throne, was what no court could possibly grant, and Bunyan was kept in prison for twelve years. It appears, however, that he was allowed many indulgences, and a considerable amount of freedom; the comparatively modern stories of his misery in "a damp and dreary den" are now believed to be grossly exaggerated. While still nominally a prisoner, we find Bunyan an elder of the Baptist church in Bedford at the close of 1671, and appointed its pastor in 1672. He was formally pardoned on the 13th of September of the latter year, and continued his business as a brazier in the town. Though his treasures swelled not to excess, he had always sufficient to live decently and creditably. While he had been in prison, he had written abundantly. One of his earliest tracts bears the strange name of *A Few Sighs from Hell* (1658). *The Holy City* was published in 1665, and *Grace Abounding* in 1666. As Mr. Froude has said, "his writings and sufferings had now made him famous throughout England." He was the recognised head of the Baptist community, and was pleasantly addressed as "Bishop Bunyan." After his release from prison, he lived unmolested for sixteen years in his house at Bedford, visiting London once a year to preach in the chapels of the Baptists. He wrote much, and the publication of the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in 1678, made him the most popular religious writer in England. The strange species of didactic novel called *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* belongs to 1680; the *Holy War* to 1682; the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* to 1684. Bunyan's constitution was robust, although his health suffered while he was in prison. His death, however, was brought about by an act of neighbourly kindness: riding through heavy rain to reconcile a son with his father, Bunyan was soaked to the skin, and died after an illness of ten days, in August 1688. His last words were, "Take me, for I come to Thee!" He was buried in the cemetery of the Dissenters in Bunhill Fields. Bunyan "appeared to be of a stern and rough temper, but in his conversation mild and affable." In person "he was tall of stature, strong-boned, though not corpulent, somewhat of a ruddy face, with sparkling

Illustration from "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman"



Facsimile of Bunyan's Will

eyes, wearing his hair on his upper lip; his hair reddish, but in his later days time had sprinkled it with grey. His nose well-set, but not declining or bending. His mouth moderate large, his forehead something high, his habit always plain and modest."

From "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman."

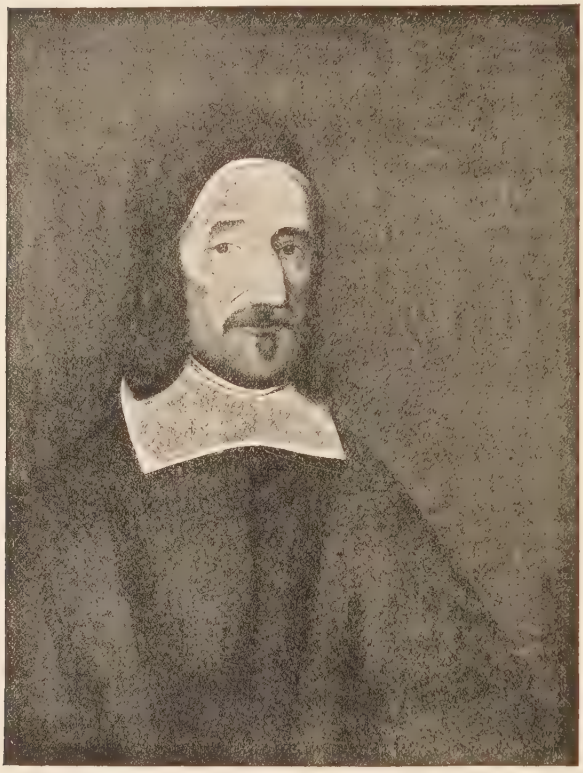
He gave a sudden and great rush into several men's debts to the value of four or five thousand pounds, driving at the same time a very great trade by selling many things for less than they cost him, to get him custom and blind his creditors' eyes. When he had well feathered his nest with other men's goods and money, after a little while he breaks; while he had by craft and knavery made so sure of what he had, that his creditors could not touch a penny. He sends mournful, sugared letters to them, desiring them not to be severe with him, for he bore towards all men an honest mind, and would pay them as far as he was able. He talked of the greatness of the taxes, the badness of the times, his losses by bad debts, and he brought them to a composition to take five shillings in the pound. His release was signed and sealed, and Mr. Badman could now put his head out of doors again, and be a better man than when he shut up shop by several thousands of pounds.

Illustration from "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman"

Take heed of being offended with magistrates, because by their statutes they may cross thy inclinations. It is given to them to bear the sword, and a command is to thee, if thy heart cannot acquiesce with all things, with meekness and patience to suffer. Discontent in the mind sometimes puts discontent into the mouth; and discontent in the mouth doth sometimes also put a halter about thy neck. For as a man speaking a word in jest may for that be hanged in earnest, so he that speaks in discontent may die for it in sober sadness. Above all, get thy conscience possessed more and more with this, that the magistrate is God's ordinance, and is ordered of God as such; that he is the minister of God to thee for good, and that it is thy duty to fear him and to pray for him, as both Paul and Peter admonish us; and that not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake. For all other arguments come short of binding the soul when this argument is wanting, until we believe that of God we are bound thereto.

I speak not these things as knowing any that are disaffected to the government, for I love to be alone, if not with godly men, in things that are convenient. I speak to show my loyalty to the king, and my love to my fellow-subjects, and my desire that all Christians shall walk in ways of peace and truth.

Richard Baxter (1615–1691) was born at Eaton Constantyne, in Shropshire, on the 12th of November 1615. He received—and all through his life he regretted this fact—no regular education. About 1638 he became a Nonconformist, and in 1639 settled as a preacher at Bridgnorth. In 1641 he was invited over to take charge of the Dissenting body in Kidderminster, where, with various interruptions, he was engaged until the Restoration. He was offered the bishopric of Hereford if he would conform to the Church of England, but he declined, nor was he allowed to return to Kidderminster. He was persecuted both by Charles II. and James II., and his treatment by Judge Jeffreys, though the details of it may have been exaggerated, was grossly insulting. He was not released until the close of 1686. His last years, it is pleasant to relate, were peaceful; and when he died in London, on the 8th of December 1691, he was buried with greater show of popular respect than had ever been displayed at a private funeral. The writings of Baxter are so numerous as to baffle the bibliographer, but nearly 170 distinct publications have been traced to his pen.



Richard Baxter

From the Portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) was born at Brampton, in Northamptonshire, on the 23rd of February 1633. He was the son of John Pepys, a London tailor. The future diarist was educated at Huntingdon and then at St. Paul's School; in 1650 he was entered a sizar at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, but removed early in 1651 to Magdalene College. He took his degree in 1653, and married Elizabeth St. Michel, whose looks were all her fortune, in 1655. In 1660 he entered the Civil Service, as Clerk of the Acts, and on January 1st of that year he made the first entry in his famous *Diary*. Pepys was then living in Axe Yard, Westminster. His fortunes now rapidly developed; he became Clerk of Privy Seal, Justice of the Peace, Younger Brother of the Trinity, and one of the Tangiers Commissioners, all within a few months. In 1664 his eyesight began to fail, and this defect grew more and more serious until, on the 31st of May 1669, he was most unfortunately obliged to desist from keeping his confidential *Diary*.

Later in the same year Mrs. Pepys died of a fever. In 1673 Pepys became M.P. for Castle Rising, and was given the highly responsible post of Secretary to the Admiralty; in 1679 and 1680 he was very unjustly persecuted for his supposed connection with the Popish Plot, in which he was really not in any way engaged. He was released from the Tower, and was sent, in the winter of 1683–4, to Tangiers to report on the value of the fortress to England. On his return Pepys was elected President of the Royal Society, and in June 1686 he again became Secretary to the Admiralty, but he was subjected to great annoyances, and in 1690 was imprisoned once more on a charge

Pepys' Birthplace at Brampton, Northamptonshire

of treason. He completed his *Memoirs of the Royal Navy*, which he published in 1690. He returned no more to public life, although he was active as treasurer to Christ's Hospital. He died at Clapham, after a long and painful illness, on the 26th of May 1703, and Evelyn noted in his diary, "This day died Mr. Sam Pepys, a very worthy, industrious, and curious person, none in England exceeding him in knowledge of the Navy." Among Pepys' effects were a collection of books and papers bequeathed to Magdalene College, Cambridge; the famous *Diary* was in this library, and about half of it was first given to the world in 1825 by Lord Braybrooke.

FROM PEPYS' "DIARY."

7th [*November* 1667].—Up, and at the office hard all the morning, and at noon resolved with Sir W. Penn to go see "The Tempest," an old play of Shakespeare's, acted, I hear, the first day; and so my wife, and girl, and W. Flewer by themselves, and Sir W. Penn and I afterwards by ourselves; and forced to sit in the side balcone over against the musique-room at the Duke's house, close by my Lady Dorset and a great many great

ones. The house mighty full; the King and Court there; and the most innocent play that ever I saw; and a curious piece of musique in an echo of half sentences, the echo repeating the former half, while the man goes on to the latter; which is mighty pretty. The play [has] no great wit, but yet good, above ordinary plays. Thence home with [Sir] W. Penn, and there all mightily pleased with the play; and so to supper and to bed, after having done at the office.

Samuel Pepys

After the Portrait by John Hayls

8th.—Called up betimes by Sir H. Cholmly, and he and I to good purpose most of the morning—I in my dressing-gown with him, on our Tangier accounts, and stated them well; and here he tells me that he believes it will go hard with my Lord Chancellor. Thence I to the office, where met on some special business; and here I hear that the Duke of York is very ill; and by and by word brought us that we shall not need to attend to-day the Duke of York, for he is not well, which is bad news. They being gone, I to my workmen, who this day come to alter my office, by beating down the wall, and making me a fayre window both there, and increasing the window of my closet, which do give me some present trouble; but will be mighty pleasant. So all the whole day among them to very late, and so home weary, to supper, and to bed, troubled for the Duke of York his being sick.

Science An interesting feature of this period was formed by the work of the new men of science, "experimental philosophers" as they were called, who continued the work of Bacon in the close investigation of physical principles. Of some of these men an account has already been given, but of those who originally met "at the lodgings of Dr. Wilkins" and there formed the nucleus of the future Royal Society, the leading spirit, ROBERT BOYLE (1627–1691), remains to be mentioned. His voluminous writings, many of which first saw the light in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, were ridiculed by Swift in his *Pious Meditation on a Broomstick* for their miscellaneous and unselected character. It is true that the scientific and philosophical curiosity of the age, which Robert Boyle, as its most prominent savant, represented, lacked the sense of proportion, and was easily led aside into purely vapid disquisition. Not he only, but Sir Isaac Newton himself, toyed with themes,

Octr. 10. 1665.

S.

I can't but thanke you for y Ac-
uaintance you have recommended mee to;
et I am ready to wish sometimes you had
tt it alone. For I can't putt a booke or
aper into his hand, out of a desire to en-
rtaine him, but hee makes mee sweat &c.
ne confounding Question or other, before I
n gett it from him againe; even to y putting
sometimes
ee to more torture to finde y Gentleman-
safe Answer, then ever Sr Heveril or Lee
did.

And for y^e Young one, you may bee sure
I'le keepe him my Friend (as you counse
mee) for feare of his Tales. For o^r my Cozen
ence of Knave has discovered more of my
Nakednesse, then ever you did, or my Lord
Shaftsbury either. In a word, I doe m
heartily joy you in him, & (as evill as our
Days are) should not bee sorry; you could
joy mee in such another. And soe, God
keepe yo^r. whole Fire-side, & send you (for
theyr sakes & y^e King's) a good occasion of
removeing yo^r. 3 Parts a little nearer us.
I dve. most respectfully kisse y^r. hands.

am

Your most faythfull, &
most humble Servant

P Pepys.

such as astrology and alchemy, which science now justly considers beneath her notice. In his own age, not one of Boyle's books awakened so much stir as his *Degradation of Gold made by an Anti-Elixir*, 1678, in which a modern reader is mainly astonished at the observer's credulity. But when all this has been said to excess, it remains the fact that Boyle, and the Invisible College of Philosophers which he claimed to have created, were the pioneers of all that science has achieved from that day to this, and that we owe the deepest gratitude to their passion for investigation and their unwearied search after truth. From our present standpoint, too, these early "virtuosi" deserve consideration on account of the care which they took to make their language elegant and lucid. In this it cannot be said that their influence on British science has been as far-reaching as might be desired.

Mrs. Pepys as St. Katherine

From an Engraving after the Portrait by John Hayls

Boyle's attitude towards life and thought is sometimes agreeably fantastic, as in such a passage as the following:—

"It is so uncommon a thing to see tulips last till roses come to be blown, that the seeing them in this garden grow together, as it deserves my notice, so methinks it should suggest to me some reflection or other on it. And perhaps it may not be an improper one to compare the difference betwixt these two kinds of flowers to the disparity which I have often observed betwixt the fates of those young ladies that are only very handsome, and those that have a less degree of beauty recompensed by the accession of wit, discretion, and virtue. For tulips, whilst they are fresh, do, indeed, by the lustre and vividness of their colours, more delight the eye than roses; but then they do not alone quickly fade, but as soon as they have lost that freshness and gaudiness that solely endeared them, they degenerate into things not only undesirable, but distasteful; whereas roses, besides the moderate beauty they disclose to the eye,—which is sufficient to please, though not to charm it,—do not only keep their colour longer than tulips, but, when that decays, retain a perfumed odour, and divers useful qualities and virtues that survive the spring, and recommend them all the year. Thus those unadvised young ladies, that, because nature has given them beauty enough, despise all other qualities, and even that regular diet which is ordinarily requisite to make beauty itself lasting, not only are wont to decay betimes, but, as soon as they have lost that youthful freshness that alone endeared them, quickly pass from being objects of wonder and love, to be so of pity, if not of scorn."

During the first twenty years after the Restoration, poetry was very little cultivated in England outside the limits of the heroic drama. That new instrument, the couplet, was acknowledged to be an admirable one, and to have excluded all competitors. But very little advance had been made in the exercise of it during the forty years which had followed the publication of Denham's *Cooper's Hill*. Dryden, for all his evidence of force, was disappointing his admirers. He had shown himself a supple prose-writer, indeed; but his achievements in verse up to his fiftieth year were not such as could claim for him any pre-eminence among poets. He was at last to discover his true field; he was about to become the greatest English satirist, and in doing so to reveal qualities of magnificent metrical power such as his warmest followers had not dreamed of. Since the Elizabethans had cultivated a rough and obscure species of satire moulded upon Persius, serious work of this class had gone out of fashion. But in the reign of Charles I. a rattling kind of burlesque rhyming, used for similar purposes in most of the countries of Europe, came into service for parodies, extravagant fables, and satirical attacks. In France, Scarron raised it to the level of literature, but it was known in England before the days of Scarron. Cleveland had used it, and Sir John Mennis, in whose *Musarum Deliciæ* we find—

Samuel Butler

After the Portrait by Cutterel

> " He that fights and runs away
> May live to fight another day ;"

and later on it was brought into great popularity by Cotton and SAMUEL BUTLER. The famous *Hudibras* of the latter, "written in the time of the Late Wars," was kept in MS. till 1663, when the publication of so gross a lampoon on the Presbyterians became possible. It was greatly relished, and though it is a barbarous and ribald production of small literary value, it is still

praised, and perhaps occasionally read. It affords rare opportunities for quotation, every few pages containing a line or couplet of considerable facetiousness. *Hudibras* was incessantly imitated, and the generic term Hudibrastics was invented for this kind of daring doggerel.

Samuel Butler (1612–1680) was born at Strensham, in Worcestershire, and was baptized in February 1612. The worldly status of his parents is matter of dispute, but that they were not rich seems to be proved from the fact that, after attending the King's School in Worcester, Butler went directly into business as a local clerk. Later on he came south, and is described as having been amanuensis to Selden. It is stated that he was in the service of Sir Samuel Luke, of Cople Ho, in Bedfordshire, a fanatical Presbyterian, from whose eccentricities Butler was immediately led (as is supposed) to make studies which were useful to him in writing *Hudibras*, but this statement has been discredited. Until past the age of fifty, however, Butler remained entirely obscure, and the ingenuity of scholars has scarcely contrived to throw the least light upon his movements. After 1660, we learn that he was secretary to the Earl of Carbery and steward of Ludlow Castle, and that he married. In 1663 appeared, at length, the first part of *Hudibras, Written in the Time of the Late Wars*. It enjoyed from the first a startling popularity, and passed without delay through several editions. The second part followed early in 1664; the third part, which completes the poem, not being given to the public until 1678. The Earl of Dorset made the fortune of *Hudibras* at court, and the king himself delighted in its witty abuse of his enemies; he is said to have carried it in his pocket, and to have

Illustration by Hogarth to Butler's "Hudibras," 1726

Criticisms upon Books & Authors

He that believes in the Scriptures is mistaken & therefore 196
thinkes he believes in God; For the Scriptures are not the im=
mediate word of God, for they were written by Men, though
dictated by Divine Revelation; of w^ch since we have no Testi=
mony but their own; nor any other Assurance, we do not be=
lieve them because they are the word of God; for we must be=
lieve them, before we believe that w^ch we receive only from
them. And if we believe God, because we believe them, we be=
lieve in him, but at the second hand; & build the Foundation of
our Faith in God, upon our Faith in Men So if we imagine we
believe in God because we believe in the Scriptures, we deceive our
selves; for if I tell a man something of a third Person w^ch he be=
lieves, he does not believe that third Person, but me that tell it
him.

He that appears to be of no Religion may perhaps be as much a
well-wisher to Dishonesty as a Religious Person, but can never
have so much Power to comit any great, or considerable mischief.
For he that breaks in every mans Defence, shall hardly be able
ever to defend any. If such Men intend any hurt to Mankinde,
they are very unwise to deprive themselves of the Power of act=
ing it, & loose so many advantages w^ch the more Profane of Reli=
gion would put into their hands. For the Saint & the Hypocrite
are so very like, that they pass all the world over undistinguished:
the difference being only in the Inside (of w^ch we have no sight,
(until it be too late) but
by Symptomes that commonly belye both. All wise men are sure of us;
that the Hypocrites are the greater Number, more devoutly zealous
in appearance, & much more crafty than these that are in earn=
est.

Guevara Antiquary to Charles the 5^th in his Epistle to him speaks
of an old Coyn of an Aegyptian King, the Ancientest that ever
he saw, that had a Latin Inscription upon it Much like the Stags
some yeares since sayd to be kild, that had a Collar found about
his neck w^th an English Roman written in it by Julius Caesar

Passage in the handwriting of Samuel Butler

been never tired of quoting it. But the poet, although "he was a good fellow," was difficult to help. He was very shy and awkward, and could never be witty unless he was quite alone with one or two familiar friends. Even then, "whilst the first bottle was drinking he appeared very flat and heavy, at the second bottle, full of wit and learning, but before the third bottle was finished he sunk again into stupidity and dulness." The king intended to patronise him, but in an interview which he gave him, Butler was so nervous, dull, and tactless, that Charles II. seems to have been disgusted with him. According to the universal contemporary tradition, Butler was neglected and sank into great poverty. He died in 1680, whether of consumption or of insufficient nourishment, or both, is undecided. He was living at the time in lodgings in Rose Street, Covent Garden, and he was buried "in the presence of about twenty-five friends" in the adjacent parish church of St. Paul's. His posthumous writings remained in MS. for nearly eighty years, when, in 1759, they were in part published by Mr. Thyer. Butler is described to us as a thick-set man of middle height, with a high colour and a shock of lion-coloured hair; he was "sanguine, choleric, middle-sized, strong." It is remarkable that in spite of his great fame during the latter years of his life, we possess scarcely any record of Butler's employments, associations, or habits. He is one of the most shrouded figures in the whole history of our literature. He lives only in his extraordinary study of the vulgar side of Puritanism, with its strange hero, in whom the qualities of Don Quixote and Tartuffe seem to meet in a bewildering and grotesque confusion of wit and wisdom.

Illustration by William Hogarth to Butler's "Hudibras"

FROM "HUDIBRAS."

Ay me! what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron!
What plaguey mischiefs and mishaps
Do dog him still with after-claps!
For though Dame Fortune seem to smile,
And leer upon him for a while,
She'll after show him, in the nick
Of all his glories, a dog-trick.

This any man may sing or say
I' th' ditty call'd "What if a Day?"
For Hudibras, who thought he'd won
The field, as certain as a gun,
And, having routed the whole troop,
With victory was cock-a-hoop,
Thinking he'd done enough to purchase
Thanksgiving-day among the Churches,

Illustration by William Hogarth to Butler's "Hudibras"

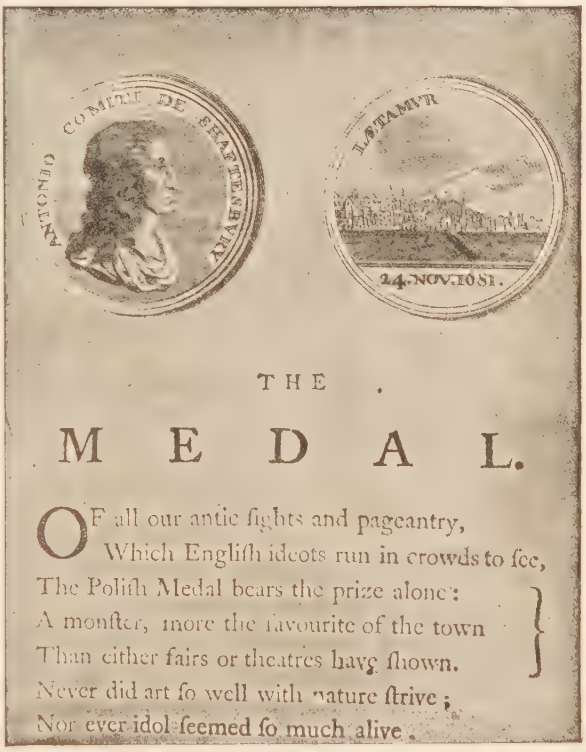
Wherein his mettle and brave worth
Might be explain'd by holder-forth,
And register'd by fame eternal
In deathless pages of Diurnal,—
Found in few minutes, to his cost,
He did but count without his host,
And that a turnstile is more certain
Than, in events of war, Dame Fortune.

There is a tall long-sided Dame,
(But wondrous light) y-clepèd Fame,
That, like a thin cameleon, boards
Herself on air, and eats her words;

Upon her shoulders wings she wears,
Like hanging sleeves, lined through with ears
And eyes and tongues, as poets list,
Made good by deep mythologist;
With them she thro' the welkin flies,
And sometimes carries truth, oft lies;
With letters hung, like eastern pigeons,
And Mercuries of furthest regions.

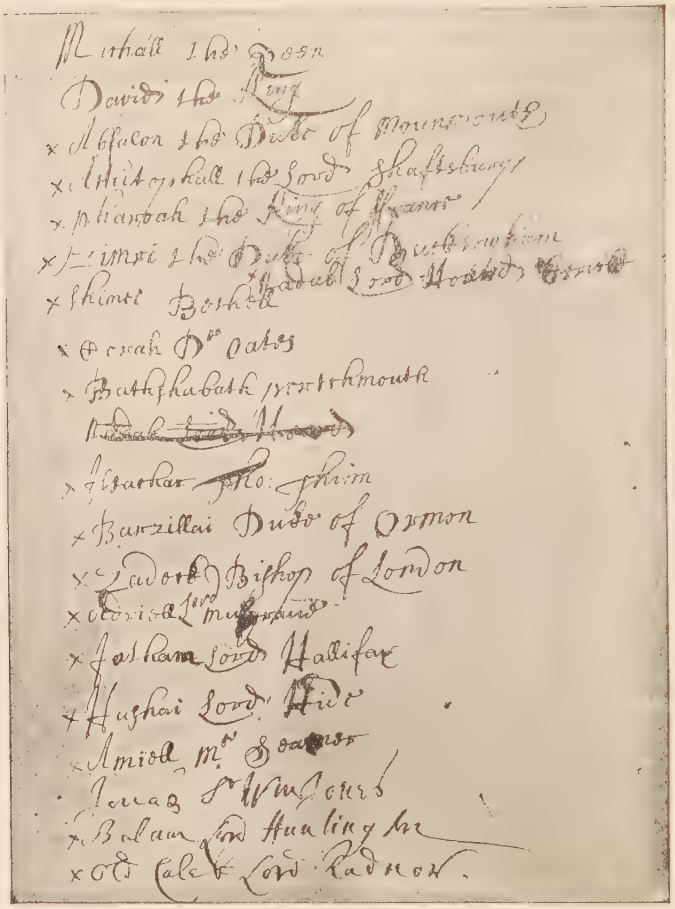
Butler, however, is a mere episode. Genuine satire was reintroduced by Marvell, and ten years later revived by Oldham. The example of that very gifted, if sinister, young man, seems to have finally directed Dryden's attention to a species of poetry which must already have occupied his thoughts in the criticism of Casaubon as well as in the marvellous verse of Boileau. Dryden did not, however, at first directly imitate the ancients or strike an intrepid blow at contemporary bad taste. His *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681–82) is political in character, a gallery of satirical portraits of public men, so painted as to excite to madness the passions of a faction at a critical moment. No poem was ever better timed. Under the thin and acceptable disguise of a Biblical narrative, the Tory poet gibbeted without mercy the heads and notables of the rival party. The two poems which closely followed it bore the same stamp. In *MacFlecknoe* the manner is more closely that of Boileau, whom Dryden here exceeds in force of bludgeon as far as he lags behind him in skill of rapier practice. But these four satires hold together, and should always be read in unison. In them Dryden suddenly rises to the height of his genius. Everything about him has expanded—the daring eloquence, the gusto of triumphant wit, and above all the majestic crash of the couplet, have for the first time been forged into a war-trumpet, through which the trumpeter can peal what notes he wishes.

Satires


ANTONIUS COMTE DE SHAFTESBURY
LA TAMYR
24. NOV. 1681.
THE
MEDAL.
OF all our antic fights and pageantry,
Which Engliſh ideots run in crowds to ſee,
The Poliſh Medal bears the prize alone:
A monſter, more the favourite of the town
Than either fairs or theatres have ſhown.
Never did art ſo well with nature ſtrive;
Nor ever idol ſeemed ſo much alive.

Portrait of the First Earl of Shaftesbury

From Dryden's "Miscellanies"



Contemporary MS. Key to Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel"

From a Copy in the British Museum

Michall the Queen
David the King
Absalon the Duke of Mounmouth
Achitophall the Lord Shaftsbury
Pharoah the King of France
Zimri the Duke of Buckingham
Nadab Lord Howard Escrick
Shimei Bethell
Corah Dr Oates
Bathshabath Portsmouth
Issachar Tho: Thinn
Barzillai Duke of Ormon
Zadock Bishop of London
Adriell Lord Mulgrave
Jotham Lord Hallifax
Hushai Lord Hide
Amiell Mr Seamer
Jonas Sr Wm Jones
Balam Lord Huntingdon
Cold Caleb Lord Radnor

FROM "ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL," PART I.

Some by their Monarch's fatal mercy grown
From pardoned rebels kinsmen to the throne
Were raised in power and public office high ;
Strong bands, if bands ungrateful men could tie.
Of these the false Achitophel was first,
A name to all succeeding ages curst :
For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit,
Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace ;

A fiery soul, which working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high,
He sought the storms ; but, for a calm unfit,
Would steer too near the sands to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied
And their partitions do their bounds divide ;
Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son,
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try,
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state ;
To compass this the triple bond he broke,
The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke ;
Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves in factious times
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.

From "MacFlecknoe."[1]

This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humours to invent for each new play :
This is that boasted bias of thy mind
By which one way to dulness 'tis inclined,
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.
Nor let thy mountain belly make pretence
Of likeness ; thine's a tympany of sense.
A tun of man in thy huge bulk is writ,
But sure thou art but a kilderkin of wit.
Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep ;
Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.
With whate'er gall thou setst thyself to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite ;
In thy felonious heart though venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen Iambics, but mild Anagram.
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
Some peaceful province in Acrostic land.
There thou mayest wings display and altars raise
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways ;
Or, if thou wouldst thy different talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute.

[1] This passage satirises Shadwell, who had posed as a sort of reincarnation of Ben Jonson ; the "mountain belly" is quoted from Jonson's humorous description of himself.

The harmony and strength of Dryden's mature manner, directed to perfectly serious themes, may now be exemplified :—

From "Religio Laici."

Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers
Is Reason to the soul : and as on high
Thy rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.
Some few, whose lamp shone brighter, have been led
From cause to cause to Nature's secret head,
And found that one first principle must be ;
But what or who that UNIVERSAL HE ;
Whether some soul encompassing this ball,
Unmade, unmoved, yet making, moving all,
Or various atoms' interfering dance
Leapt into form (the noble work of chance,)
Or this great All was from eternity,
Not even the Stagirite himself could see,
And Epicurus guessed as well as he.

From "The Hind and the Panther," Part I.

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged
Fed on the lawns and in the forest ranged ;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds
And Scythian shafts ; and many winged wounds
Aimed at her heart ; was often forced to fly,
And doomed to death, though fated not to die.
  Not so her young ; for their unequal line
Was hero's make, half human, half divine.
Their earthly mould obnoxious was to fate,
The immortal part assumed immortal state.
Of these a slaughtered army lay in blood,
Extended o'er the Caledonian wood,
Their native walk ; whose vocal blood arose
And cried for pardon on their perjured foes.
Their fate was fruitful, and the sanguine seed,
Endued with souls, increased the sacred breed.
So captive Israel multiplied in chains,
A numerous exile, and enjoyed her pains.
With grief and gladness mixed, their mother viewed
Her martyred offspring and their race renewed ;
Their corps to perish, but their kind to last,
So much the deathless plant the dying fruit surpassed.
  Panting and pensive now she ranged alone,
And wandered in the kingdoms once her own.

The common hunt, though from their rage restrained
By sovereign power, her company disdained,
Grinned as they passed, and with a glaring eye
Gave gloomy signs of secret enmity.
'Tis true she bounded by and tripped so light,
They had not time to take a steady sight;
For truth has such a face and such a mien
As to be loved needs only to be seen.

Two examples may now be offered of the lyrical style of Dryden :—

From "The Ode to the Mem ry of Anne Killigrew."

Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blest;
Whose palms, new plucked from Paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green above the rest:
Whether, adopted to some neighbouring star
Thou rollst above us in thy wandering race,
Or in possession fixed and regular
Moved with the heaven's majestic pace,
Or called to more superior bliss,
Thou treadst with seraphims the vast abyss:
Whatever happy region be thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since Heaven's eternal year is thine.
Hear then a mortal Muse thy praise rehearse
In no ignoble verse,
But such as thy own voice did practise here,
When thy first fruits of poesy were given,
To make thyself a welcome inmate there;
While yet a young probationer,
And candidate of Heaven.

A Song for St. Cecilia's Day.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began;
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Arise, ye more than dead.
Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason ending full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell,
To worship that celestial sound:

Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries, Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains and height of passion
For the fair disdainful dame.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blessed above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

Lyrists of the Restoration

These elaborate lyrical writings of Dryden remained consistent in their form to the pseudo-Pindaric type introduced by Cowley, and popular from 1650 until well on into the eighteenth century. Amongst those who, in the early life of Dryden, were prominent writers of odes, may

be mentioned KATHERINE PHILIPS (1631–1664), known as "the Matchless Orinda," and THOMAS FLATMAN (1633–1688), whose *Poems and Songs*, first printed in 1674, became one of the most popular books of the age. Flatman, who was the direct disciple of Cowley, was decreed by his contemporaries an "infallible eternity," but none of his poetry, though sometimes elegant and manly, has pleased a modern taste. Of all the harvest of Pindaric odes, by far the most imaginative in its references to exterior nature was addressed to Flatman by a poet of whom nothing else is known, OCTAVIUS PULLEYN. It opens thus :—

"The Matchless Orinda"

Within the haunted thicket, where
The feathered choristers are met to play,
And celebrate, with voices clear
And accents sweet, the praise of May,
The ouzel, thrush, and speckled lark,
And Philomel, that loves the dawn and dark,—
These, the inspirèd throng,
In numbers smooth and strong,
Adorn their noble theme with an immortal song ;
While woods and vaults, the brook, the neighbouring hill,
Repeat the varied close, and the melodious trill.

Of Flatman himself, one specimen may suffice :—

THE SURRENDER.

I yield, I yield ! Divine Althæa, see
How prostrate at thy feet I bow,
Fondly in love with my captivity ;
So weak am I ! so mighty thou !
Not long ago, I could defy
(Arm'd with wine and company)
Beauty's whole artillery ;
Quite vanquished now by thy miraculous charms,
Here, fair Althæa, take my arms !
For, sure, he cannot be of human race
That can resist so bright, so sweet a face.

Thomas Flatman

From a Miniature by Himself

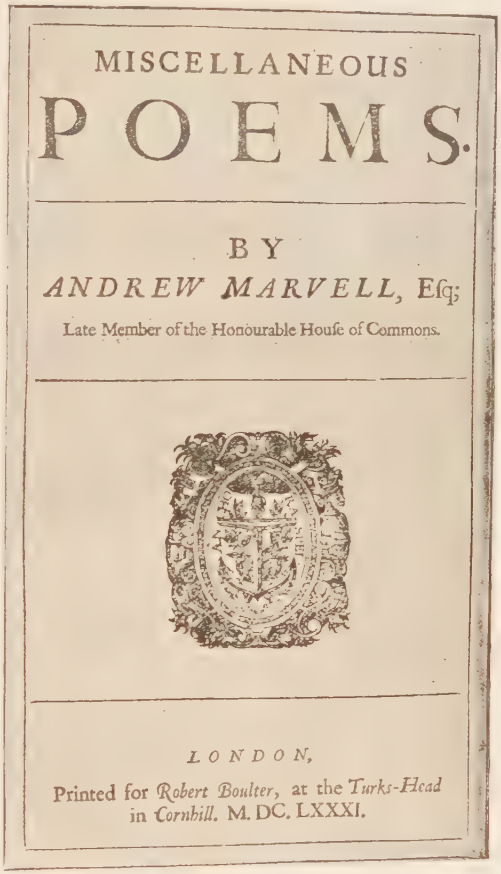
Andrew Marvell (1621–1678) was the eldest son and fourth child of the Rev. Andrew Marvell, incumbent of Winestead, in Yorkshire, where the poet was born on Easter Eve, 1621. When he was three years old his father was appointed master of the Grammar School at Hull, and the future poet seems to have run wild ; in later years the "rude and uncivil language" of his satires was

attributed to his "first unhappy education among boatswains and cabin-boys." In his thirteenth year, however, he went up to Cambridge as a sizar of Trinity College, whence, according to an odd story, he was kidnapped by Jesuits and brought up to London; after several months his father found him and brought him back to Trinity. He took his degree in 1638, and seems to have been still living in college when, in 1641, his father, while escorting the daughter of his friend, Mrs. Skinner, across the Harbour, was drowned with all the party. Marvell was immediately adopted by Mrs. Skinner, and after this event he is heard of no more at Cambridge.

Andrew Marvell
After the Portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

The next five years he spent on the Continent, and in 1650, when Lord Fairfax retired to his estates at Nunappleton, he took Marvell with him as tutor to his little daughter Mary, afterwards Duchess of Buckingham. At Nunappleton, Marvell spent two years of great contentment, and here he wrote nearly all the poems by which he lives in literature. He was unusually proficient in modern languages, and this induced Milton, in 1653, to propose him to Bradshaw as his coadjutor in the secretaryship. This appeal was, for the time, unsuccessful, but in 1657 Marvell became Milton's colleague. Marvell seems to have known Oliver Cromwell in some intimacy, and he wrote three long poems in his praise. In January 1659, Marvell was elected senior M.P. for Hull, and he served in every Parliament until his death. At the Restoration it is said that he "acted vigorously" in saving the life of Milton. He became celebrated immediately for his personal integrity and devotion to public business. During these last years he circulated a series of coarse and envenomed satires against political and social abuses, and he made so many powerful enemies that when, on the 18th of August 1678, he rather suddenly died in London, his death was attributed to poison. But it is now supposed that Marvell died of an aguish attack, which the use of quinine, if that drug had then been procurable, would have removed. His serious poetry had never been printed, and might easily have been lost, had not his widow shown a zealous care of it. She collected all that she could find, and published it in a thin folio of unusual typographical beauty, in 1681. Marvell took a prominent part in the Church controversies of the day. He was "of a middling stature, pretty strong set, roundish-faced, cherry-cheeked,

hazel eyes, brown hair." In that day, when almost all men had their price, Marvell's rigorous refusal of bribes was the subject of a surprised admiration, and figures in many anecdotes. His satires, also posthumous, appeared in *Poems on Affairs of State* in 1689.


MISCELLANEOUS
POEMS.
BY
ANDREW MARVELL, Esq;
Late Member of the Honourable House of Commons.
LONDON,
Printed for Robert Boulter, at the Turks-Head in Cornhill. M. DC. LXXXI.

Title-page of Marvell's Poems of 1681

The Bermudas.

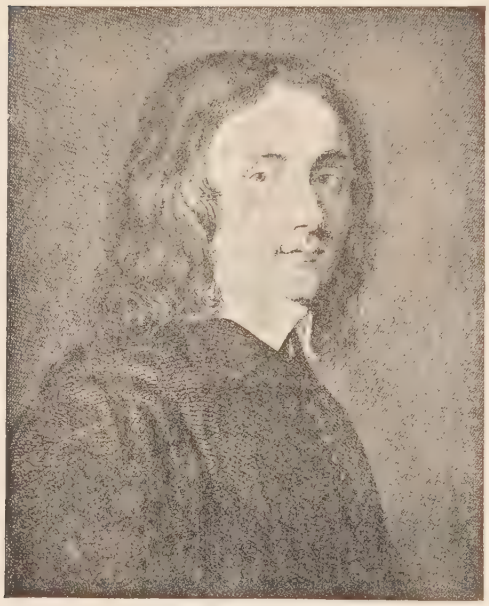
Where the remote Bermudas ride.
In the ocean's bosom unespied,
From a small boat, that rowed along,
The listening winds received this song:

"What should we do but sing His praise,
That led us through the watery maze,
Unto an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own?
Where He the huge sea-monsters wracks,
That lift the deep upon their backs,
He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms, and prelates' rage.
He gave us this eternal spring
Which here enamels everything,
And sends the fowls to us in care,
On daily visits through the air;
He hangs in shade the orange bright,
Like golden lamps in a green night,
And does in the pomegranates close
Jewels more rich than Ormus shows;
He makes the figs our mouths to meet,
And throws the melons at our feet,
But apples plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice.
With cedars chosen by His hand
From Lebanon, He stores the land,
And makes the hollow seas that roar
Proclaim the ambergrease on shore;
He cast (of which we rather boast)
The Gospel's pearl upon our coast,
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple where to sound his name.
Oh! let our voice His praise exalt,
'Till it arrive at heaven's vault,
Which then (perhaps) rebounding may
Echo beyond the Mexique bay."

Thus sung they, in the English boat,
A holy and a cheerful note,
And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time.

John Oldham (1653–1683) was the son of the minister in Shipton-Moyne in Gloucestershire, where he was born on the 9th of August 1653. He proceeded from Tetbury Grammar School to St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, in 1670. After taking his degree in 1674, Oldham was usher in a school at

Croydon from 1675 to 1678, during which time his satires were beginning to be shown from hand to hand in MS. One day the poet, and the school, were surprised by a visit from the Earls of Rochester and Dorset and Sir Charles Sedley, who paid him the highest compliments, and presently helped him to quit that mean position. From 1678 to 1681 Oldham was private tutor in several distinguished families. He published his *Satires upon the Jesuits* in the latter year, and was encouraged by the success of it "to retire to London and resort then among the wits." He induced the Earl of Kingston to become his patron, and he was living with that nobleman at Holme Pierrepoint, in Notts, when he was seized with the small-pox, and died on the 9th of December 1683, in his thirty-first year. His *Remains in Prose and Verse* were published in 1684, with the following magnificent poem of regret by Dryden:—



John Oldham

After the Portrait by Dobson, formerly at Strawberry Hill

"To the Memory of Mr. Oldham."

Farewell, too little and too lately known,
Whom I began to think and call my own:
For sure our souls were near allied, and thine
Cast in the same poetic mould as mine.
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike.
To the same goal did both our studies drive:
The last set out the soonest did arrive.
Thus Nisus fell upon the slippery place,
Whilst his young friend performed and won the race.
O early ripe! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more?
It might (what nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.
But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line,
A noble error, and but seldom made,
When poets are by too much force betrayed.
Thy generous fruits, though gathered ere their prime,
Still showed a quickness; and maturing time
But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of rhyme.
Once more, hail, and farewell! farewell, thou young,
But ah! too short, Marcellus of our tongue!
Thy brows with ivy and with laurels bound;
But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.

For the next twenty years, in spite of his congenial irregularity of performance, Dryden continued to be incomparably the greatest poet of his age. Although he wrote personal satire no more, he never lost that resonance, that voluminous note which the anger of 1681 had ripened in him. In *The Hind and the Panther* he softened the music a little, and embroidered a harsh garment with beautiful ornament of episode. In his successive odes and elegies, his copious verse-translations, his songs and his fables, he enlarged his ground, and even in his tragedies and comedies fell no longer below an average of merit which would have sufficed to make another man famous. This may be a proper moment for a consideration of Dryden's place in English poetry. It is certain that of those who are undeniably the leaders of our song he is far from being the most beloved. The fault is not all his, nor all that of the flat and uninspiring epoch in which he lived. A taste for poetry at the present day often involves no intellectual consideration whatever. Charm alone is made the criterion of excellence, and we often praise nothing but that which startles us by the temerity of fancy or the *morbidezza* of artistic detail. But Dryden, like Horace and Dante, judged otherwise. In his own words, "They cannot be good poets who are not accustomed to argue well." When he congratulated the age of which he was the greatest ornament on its poetical superiority, he was thinking mainly of intelligence and of workmanship. We value these qualities less, perhaps too little; but, at all events, we shall do no justice to Dryden if we exclude them from our main conception of his aims. What he wished to do, and what he did, was to follow the great Latin poets with a close, yet easy reverence, and to observe, more obliquely, what the consummate Frenchmen of his own time were achieving. To all this he added a noble roughness and virility of speech which was part of his English birthright, a last legacy from the Chaucer and Shakespeare whom he still had the width of vision to admire. Dryden's exuberant vivacity, his solidity of judgment, his extraordinary command of all the rhetorical artifices of poetry, pointed him out as a leader of men, and should prepare us to find his influence the dominant one in all verse-writing in England for a hundred years after his death. It was Dryden who gave impetus and direction to the oratorical and anti-lyrical movement which continued to rule English poetry until, in its final decay, it was displaced by the romantic naturalism of Wordsworth.

The foundation and development of modern English comedy on the pure Terentian basis is, from a technical point of view, one of the most remarkable features of the epoch which we are examining. The romantic comedy, in which Shakespeare had excelled, and in which even Shirley might be considered respectable, had vanished entirely with the closing of the theatres. What passed for comedy at the Restoration was of the Jonsonian type, the comedy of humours—we have already spoken of Wilson's efforts in this direction. But the true modern comedy, of which Corneille's *Le Menteur* (1642) is the first finished example, comedy as Molière understood it, was imported into England by Etheredge, in *The Man of Mode*. Sedley, too, less elegantly, was also an innovator; and a few years later WILLIAM WYCHERLEY, who had written a

couple of farces or imbroglios in the Spanish style, produced in *The Country Wife* a vigorous and sparkling imitation of *L'Ecole des Femmes*, and followed it up with *The Plain Dealer*, one of the most brutally cynical, but none the less one of the best-constructed pieces which have ever held the stage. With his magnificent gaiety and buoyancy, Wycherley exaggerated and disfigured the qualities which should rule the comic stage, but they were there; he was a ruffian, but a ruffian of genius. Wycherley and Etheredge represented comedy under Charles II. At the very close of the century there came the young wits whom I have elsewhere attempted to distinguish by calling them the Orange School. Of these WILLIAM CONGREVE was the greatest; his reign was short, from 1693 to 1700, but it was extremely brilliant. No one, perhaps, in any country, has written prose for the stage with so assiduous a solicitude for style. Congreve balances, polishes, sharpens his sentences till they seem like a set of instruments prepared for an electrical experiment; the current is his unequalled wit, and it flashes and leaps without intermission from the first scene to the last. The result is one of singular artificiality; and almost from the outset—from the moment, at all events, that Congreve's manner ceased to dazzle with its novelty—something was felt, even by his contemporaries, to be wanting. The something, no doubt, was humanity, sympathy, nature.

Sir George Etheredge (1634 (?)–1691) was probably brought up in France, but we really know nothing definite about his parentage, education, or profession. He shows, however, a remarkably close acquaintance with Paris and Parisian life, and was doubtless a resident in that city until after the Restoration. His first play, *The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub*, was produced at the very end of 1663, and all the town found it, as Pepys did, "very merry." In spite of its success, Etheredge did not come forward again until, in 1668, he brought out *She Would if She Could*; his third play, *The Man of Mode*, was acted first in 1676. These are his only productions. We now first begin to catch sight of the dramatist as a person, and we find him the associate of the wild wits of the day, tossing fiddlers in blankets, and skirmishing with the watch. About 1678 Etheredge was married, and in 1685 was appointed English Resident or Envoy at Ratisbon. Before this he is believed to have served diplomatically at Constantinople. For the next three years (1685–88) we can follow Etheredge pretty closely, as his official letters from Ratisbon have been preserved. He was expecting to be made Minister at Stockholm, when the Revolution obliged him, in 1689, "to seek an asylum among the French," his interests being wholly bound up with those of James II. It is thought that the king sent him to Vienna to ask for help, and that, failing to get it, he then withdrew to Paris. According to an early legend, Etheredge fell downstairs in a drunken condition, and broke his neck. His death, at all events, is believed to have occurred in Paris early in 1691. Etheredge seems to have been a pleasant social butterfly; he is called "loose, wandering Etheredge in wild pleasures tossed," and "gentle, easy George." No portrait of him is known to exist, but he is described as a "fair, slender man," with a fresh complexion which he spoiled by drink. He was "very affable and courteous, of a sprightly and generous temper."

William Congreve.

AFTER A MINIATURE IN THE ROYAL LIBRARY, WINDSOR CASTLE.

Sir Charles Sedley (1639–1701) was the son of Sir John Sedley, Bart., of Aylesford; his mother was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Henry Savile, the famous provost of Eton. He was admitted a fellow-commoner of Wadham College, Oxford, in 1656, but left without taking a degree, and early in 1657 had married Catherine, the daughter of Earl Rivers. He withdrew to Aylesford and lived there quietly till the Restoration, when he came to court and was extremely well received by Charles II., who liked his jolly temper and reckless wit. He was the scandal of a scandalous age, for his gross and impudent frolics, but after a very serious riot in 1663, Sedley took life a little more gravely. He entered politics as M.P. for New Romney, in 1668, and for the rest of his life he was usually in Parliament. His comedy of *The Mulberry Garden*, his best play, enjoyed a great success in 1668. James II. made Sedley's daughter his mistress, and created her Countess of Dorchester; "this honour, so far from pleasing, greatly shocked Sir Charles." He determined to aid William of Orange, and wittily said: "As the King has made my daughter [Catherine] a countess, I will endeavour to make his daughter [Mary] a queen, for I hate ingratitude." He had the pleasure of seeing his wishes gratified. Sedley died on the 20th of August 1701. He was a very sparkling talker, and a gay, agreeable companion; and, with Rochester, one of the best song-writers of the age.

William III.

Song by Sir Charles Sedley.

Phillis is my only joy,
  Faithless as the winds or seas,
Sometimes coming, sometimes coy,
  Yet she never fails to please;
    If with a frown
    I am cast down,
    Phillis smiling
    And beguiling
Makes me happier than before.

Though alas! too late I find
  Nothing can her fancy fix,
Yet the moment she is kind
  I forgive her with her tricks;
    Which though I see,
    I can't get free,—
    She deceiving,
    I believing,—
What need lovers wish for more.

SONG BY JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER (1647–1680).

When on those lovely looks I gaze,
To see a wretch pursuing,
In raptures of a blest amaze,
His pleasing happy ruin,
'Tis not for pity that I move;
His fate is too aspiring,
Whose heart, broke with a load of love,
Dies wishing and admiring.

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester

After the Portrait by W. Wissing

But if this murder you'd forego,
Your slave from death removing,
Let me your art of charming know,
Or you learn mine of loving;
But whether life or death betide,
In love 'tis equal measure,
The victor lives with empty pride,
The vanquished dies with pleasure.

SONG BY MRS. APHRA BEHN (1640–1689).

[FROM "ABDELAZAR."]

Love in fantastic triumph sate,
Whilst bleeding hearts around him flowed,
For whom fresh pains he did create,
And strange tyrannic power he showed;
From thy bright eyes he took his fires,
Which round about in sport he hurled;
But 'twas from mine he took desires
Enough to undo the amorous world

Aphra Behn

From me he took his sighs and tear
From thee his pride and cruelty,
From me his languishment and fears,
And every killing dart from thee;
Thus thou, and I, the god have armed,
And set him up a deity,
But my poor heart alone is harmed,
While thine the victor is, and free.

William Wycherley (1640–1715) was the son of a Shropshire country gentleman, *Wycherley*
Daniel Wycherley, of Clive, where he is said to have been born in 1640. In 1655 he was taken to France to be educated, and for some years "he resided upon the banks of the Charente." A precocious and handsome boy, he was admitted into the society of the French court, and became a Roman Catholic. At the Restoration he returned to England and the English Church; he became first a student of the Inner Temple, and then a gentleman-commoner of Queen's College, Oxford, where he lived in the Provost's lodge. He left the University without taking a degree, and coming up to London threw himself into such a career of gaiety as the new reign had opened to any young man of quality and wealth. He was at one time a soldier serving in the Dutch War. It is difficult, however, to conjecture what his occupations may have been until 1671, when he produced at Drury Lane his first work, the comedy of *Love in a Wood*. This was a very great success, and introduced Wycherley not merely to his fellow-poets but to various great ladies, among whom the Duchess of Cleveland was the most prominent. A coarse but picturesque anecdote recounts the manner in which the latter bestowed her favour upon Wycherley, and exemplifies that readiness of badinage which we learn was one of his most dazzling ornaments. The liaison between Wycherley and the Duchess "made a great noise in the town," and excited the jealousy of the Duke of Buckingham, who threatened to ruin the poet. A meeting between them was, however, contrived, and the Duke succumbed to

Wycherley's wit and charm. The latter was now one of the prominent figures in London society, and he had a short period of brilliant dramatic success, with *The Gentleman Dancing Master* in 1672, *The Country Wife* in 1673, and *The Plain Dealer* in 1674; each of these plays was first printed somewhat later. During an illness Charles II. visited the poet in his lodgings, and poured every mark of favour upon him. Wycherley, however, gave offence by marrying the young Dowager Countess of Drogheda, who had fallen in love with him, without asking the royal consent.

William Wycherley

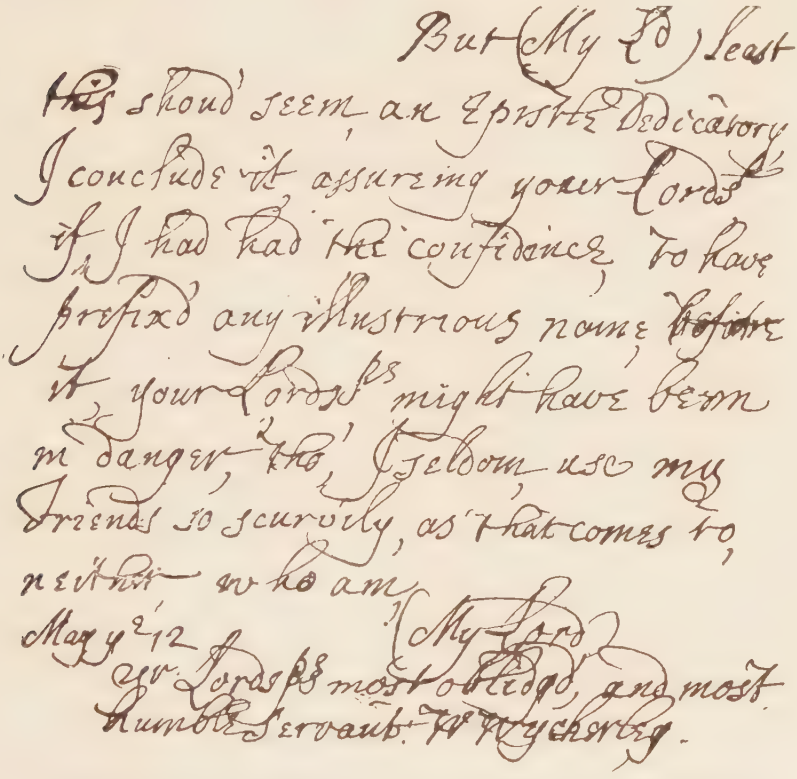
From an Engraving after the Portrait by Sir Peter Lely

From this point, about 1678, the tide of Wycherley's fortunes turned, and he endured one misfortune after another. His wife died in 1681, leaving him her large estates, but a flaw was found in the will and Wycherley became penniless. He is said to have spent seven years in a debtor's prison, and on his release lived a life of great retirement. James II. gave him a pension of £200 a year, and when at length his father died in 1697 Wycherley came in for a life-interest in the Shropshire property. In 1704, when he was sixty-four, he entered into his curious correspondence with the youthful Pope, and was encouraged to publish his "Poems." In his seventy-sixth year Wycherley persuaded a young girl of some fortune to marry him; he survived this disgraceful act only eleven days, dying at the close of the year 1715. He was buried in the vault of Covent Garden Church. Wycherley was celebrated in his youth for a combination of vivacity and physical strength which made him highly attractive. He was a very handsome man, and his success with the ladies was so great as to be embarrassing to himself. In spite of the extreme readiness of his wit in conversation, he was a solid, slow, and even laborious writer, and it is due, no doubt, to indolence that he produced so little in a field where his excellence was universally admitted. His plays would even now be read, were it not that they exhibit in their vigorous and vivacious scenes the coarse life of the times with too cynical and even brutal an exactitude.

Congreve

William Congreve (1670–1729), who belonged to an ancient Staffordshire family, was born at Bardsey, near Leeds, on the 10th of February 1670. His father, who was also William Congreve, moved into Ireland, and the poet's childhood was spent at Youghal and at Lismore. He was educated at Kilkenny school, and went in 1685 to Trinity College, Dublin. Here he made the friendship of Swift, and began to

write. In 1688 the Congreves seem to have returned to their home at Stratton, in Staffordshire. The poet composed his first play, *The Old Bachelor*, in a garden in 1690, while he was recovering from a long illness. Congreve came up to London in March 1691, and formed the acquaintance of Dryden, who was greatly attracted to him, and advised him in the production of his works. A novel, *Incognita*, belongs to 1692, and Congreve was one of those who had the honour of helping Dryden to complete his translation of *Juvenal and Persius*. *The Old Bachelor* was brought



Extract from an Autograph Letter of Wycherley to Lord Halifax

out at the Theatre Royal in the first days of 1693, and enjoyed a signal success. Dryden said that "he never saw such a first play in his life, and Congreve at once stepped to the front rank of contemporary authorship, at the age of only twenty-three. Later, in the same year, he produced *The Double Dealer*, and passed under the protection of Queen Mary. *Love for Love* appeared at Easter 1695, and Congreve, who by this time seems to have squandered his paternal resources, was made a Commissioner of Hackney Coaches. His tragedy of *The Mourning Bride* was acted early in 1697, and in 1698 Congreve was much disturbed, and his prestige successfully assailed, by Jeremy Collier's attacks upon the impiety and indecency of the stage. Congreve attempted to answer Collier, but in an unfortunate style and spirit. In March 1700, *The Way of the World* was brought out at Lincoln's Inn; this was the most splendidly elaborate of all Congreve's plays, and he anticipated brilliant results from it. It was only partly

successful, and Congreve, though not quite thirty years of age, withdrew in disgust from public life, after bringing out his opera of *The Judgment of Paris* in 1701. After this date his publications were rare, and of trifling importance. Congreve had begun, as quite a young man, to suffer from the gout, and his health now continued to decline. In 1705 he joined Vanbrugh in the management of the Haymarket Theatre, and his financial position was improved in the same year by his appointment as Commissioner of Wine Licences. In 1710 Congreve collected his "works," and although he was now but forty years of age he posed as an old man, representative of a bygone generation. He formed an intimacy with Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, which lasted on to the close of his life. In 1726 he was visited by Voltaire, who found him entirely indifferent to literature: "he spoke of his works as trifles that were beneath him, and hinted that [Voltaire] should visit him upon no other foot than that of a gentleman who led a life of plainness and simplicity." In 1728 he had a last flash of inventive power, and wrote his graceful *Epistle to Lord Cobham*. In the early spring of that year he went down to Bath with the Duchess and Gay; returning to London in the autumn, Congreve's coach was upset, and he sustained internal injuries. He gradually sank, and passed away, in his house in Surrey Street, Strand, on the 19th of January 1729. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. He left £10,000 to the Duchess of Marlborough, who wasted it in all kinds of pranks and folly, among other things, on a life-sized statue of Congreve in wax, which was made to nod when she spoke to it, and the feet of which were daily treated for gout by a physician. Congreve, in his prime, was a handsome plump man, very easy-going and friendly. Gay called him "unreproachful," and Pope and Tonson agreed that Garth, Vanbrugh, and Congreve were "the three most honest-hearted real good men" in the Kit-Kat Club. Although his health broke up so completely before middle life, Congreve was nimble and athletic in his early youth. His friendship with Mrs. Bracegirdle, "the Diana of the stage," was lifelong, and was continued with an elegant discretion that silenced scandal; in one of his letters Congreve says, "You know me enough to know that I feel very sensibly and silently for those whom I love."

William Congreve

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

My Lord

By y^r Graces direction, & Southern has done me the honour to read his tragedy to me. I cannot but think that it has been a wrong to the town, as well as an injury to the Author, that such a work has been so long withheld from the Publick. This I say with respect to it as a Play.

Whatever may have been supposed or suggested against it on the score of Politicks, is in my Opinion absolutely groundless. I can see no shadow of an Objection to it upon that account; tho I have attended to it very precisely even in regard to that particular, in Justice to Mr Southern and in Obedience to y^r Graces Commands. I can have place in my thoughts on this occasion. I am always with the greatest respect

My Lord

Your Graces most Obedient
humble Servant
Wm Congreve

Autograph Letter from Congreve to the Duke of Newcastle

From "The Mourning Bride" (1697).

Almeria. It was a fancied noise, for all is hushed.
Leonora. It bore the accent of a human voice.
Almeria. It was thy fear, or else some transient wind,
Whistling thro' hollows of this vaulted isle.
We'll listen—
Leonora. Hark!
Almeria. No! all is hush'd, and still as death! 'Tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads
To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made steadfast and immovable,
Looking tranquillity. It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and speak to me, nay! speak,
And let us hear thy voice,—
My own affrights me with its echoes!
Leonora. Let us return! the horror of this place
And silence will increase your melancholy.

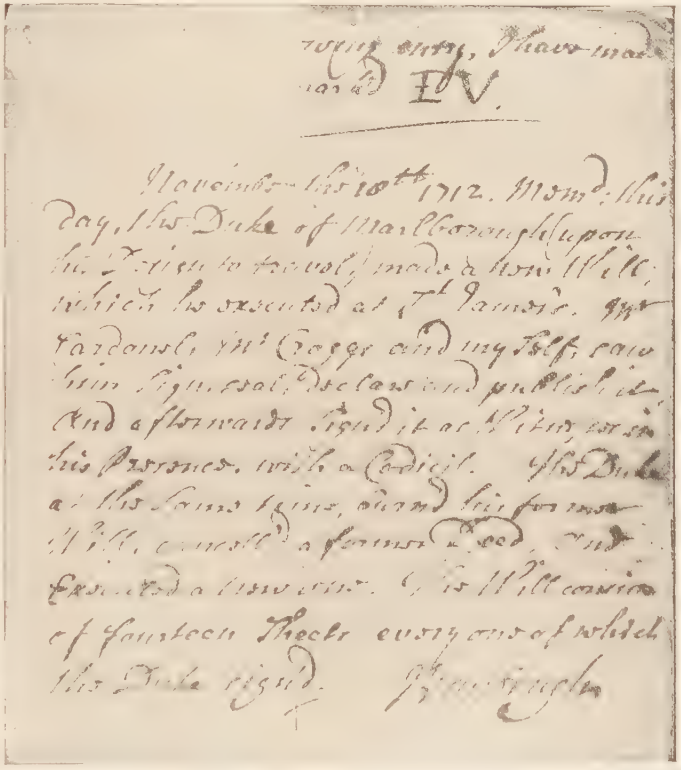
Sir John Vanbrugh has none of Congreve's pre-eminence in style. He has no style at all; he simply throws his characters at one another's heads, and leaves them to fight it out as they will. But he has great fire and vigour of redundant fancy. After him came Farquhar, with his mess-room tone, and what Pope called his "pert, low dialogue," but also with a manly tenderness that excused his faults. Steele followed, with his lachrymose comedies of sentiment; and in Susannah Centlivre the music that Etheredge had begun to so sprightly a tune came to an ignominious finale. Of all the brilliant body of literature so produced in some forty years, not one piece has held the stage. There were moral reasons for this inevitable exclusion. If merit of a purely literary or even theatrical kind were alone to be considered, revivals of Wycherley and Congreve ought

Sir John Vanbrugh

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

to be frequent. But the fact is that Restoration comedy is of a universal profligate coarseness which enters into the very essence of the plot and is ineradicable. It is only by dint of the most delicate pilotage that one or other of these admirably written comedies is now and again, in an extremely modified form, safely steered across the footlights. In 1698 the non-juror Jeremy Collier made an attack on the immorality and profaneness of the English stage. The public was on Collier's side, and his blows were so efficient that they practically killed, not indecency only, but the practice of comedy itself.

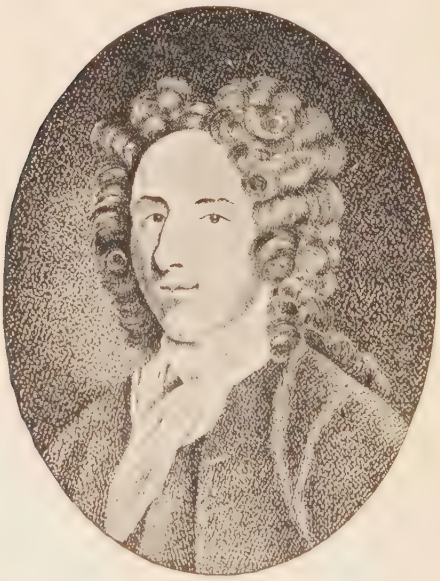
Sir John Vanbrugh (1664–1726) was the son of Giles Vanbrugh or Van Brugg, a sugar-baker of Flemish descent, settled in London; the future dramatist and architect was christened there, in the parish of St. Nicholas Acons, on the 24th of January 1664. The family left London in 1665, and are found settled at Chester in 1667, where Giles Vanbrugh continued to be a leading citizen until his death in 1689. His son John is thought to have been sent to France in 1683 to study architecture, and in 1692 was "clapped up in the Bastille" under suspicion of being a spy. He was imprisoned there for some time, and during this enforced idleness he bethought himself that he might try his hand at a comedy, and he sketched what afterwards became *The Provok'd Wife*. Later in the year 1692 we find him released, styled Captain Vanbrugh, and fighting a duel with a colonel of the Scots Guards, whom he killed. We know little of Vanbrugh's mode of life until 1696, when he produced his first play, *The Relapse*, which was quickly succeeded in 1697, by *Æsop* and *The Provok'd Wife*. The success of those dramas was extraordinary, and Vanburgh took his place at once as one of the two or three leading dramatists of the day. He was involved, in 1698, in the acrimonious controversy between the Church and the Stage, which



MS. Note of Vanbrugh's in reference to the Duke of Marlborough's Will

was started by Jeremy Collier. Vanbrugh wrote several other plays before, in 1702, he was appointed by Lord Carlisle the architect of Castle Howard. His success with this building led to his being nominated by Queen Anne Comptroller of the Public Works, and in the summer of 1705 he began the long and trying business of building Blenheim. In spite of his total ignorance of heraldry, which he had ridiculed in one of his plays, Vanbrugh was created Clarenceux King-at-Arms. He was now extremely prosperous, but he was so unwise as to waste his money in building "a stately theatre in the Haymarket," which was a failure and a drain upon his resources for many years. His peace of mind was also embittered by the ingratitude and folly of the Duchess of Marlborough, who at last dragged him into the Court of Chancery. Towards the end of his life, however, Vanbrugh seems to have recovered his prosperity and peace, and to have been engaged in a great deal of profitable architectural business. He died of quinsy, in the house he had built for himself at Whitehall—that "thing resembling a goose-pie" at which Swift had mocked—on the 26th of March 1726. Vanbrugh was good-natured, very easy and witty in conversation, "an honest-hearted real good man," Pope said. Although his own architecture is extremely heavy and pseudo-Palladian, Vanbrugh had a sympathy before his time with mediæval work. He strove vehemently, though in vain, to save Woodstock from the vandal Duchess, and his "inclination to ruins" was laughed at by his prosaic contemporaries.

George Farquhar (1678–1707) was son of a dean of Armagh, and was born at Londonderry in 1678. He went up to Dublin as a sizar of Trinity College in July 1694, but "his gay and volatile disposition could not long relish the grave and regular course of a collegiate life." He paid more attention to the players' company than to his professors, and soon appeared on the stage itself. Farquhar was a fair actor, and might have taken up his profession, but he was so unfortunate as to inflict a very serious wound with a sword on a fellow-tragedian as they were acting *The Indian Emperor* together, and he lost his nerve entirely. He proceeded to London, in 1696, and began to write for the stage. He was only twenty, when his first comedy, *Love and a Bottle*, was very well received at Drury Lane. Farquhar composed seven comedies, several of which were among the most successful compositions of the age. He introduced Mrs. Anne Oldfield to the boards, and that illustrious actress appeared in all Farquhar's pieces. In 1700 he spent some time in Holland. In 1703 a penniless girl, who had fallen madly in love with Farquhar, contrived, by representing herself as a great heiress, to entrap him into marriage; "to his immortal honour be it recorded that he never once was known to upbraid his wife for an imposition which love for him alone had urged her to." This unlucky marriage, however, is supposed to have shortened his life, for his eminently sensitive nature suffered so much distress



George Farquhar

Colley Cibber.

FROM THE PLASTER BUST BY LOUIS F. ROUBILLAC.

from the privations to which his wife and children were exposed by poverty, that his health gave way, and he died of a decline in April 1707, not having completed his thirtieth year. He did not live to enjoy the success of *The Beaux' Stratagem*, the latest and perhaps the most sparkling of his comedies. Farquhar was a romantic creature, "splenetic and yet amorous"; for several years he was a soldier, and lieutenant in an Irish regiment, but he had at last to sell his commission to pay his debts. He was a warm-hearted, glowing man, too sensitive to bear the blows of life and ill-prepared to parry them.

The long life of **Colley Cibber** (1671–1757) extends far into the eighteenth century, to which it seems to belong, but he was actually writing for the stage a little earlier than Vanbrugh or Farquhar. He was the son of Caius Gabriel Cibber, a Danish sculptor settled in London, where he was born, on the 6th of November 1671, in Southampton Street, Covent Garden. He was sent to school at Grantham, in Lincolnshire, and was to have proceeded to Cambridge, but his father being at Chatsworth engaged on some decorations, the Earl of Devonshire saw the young Colley, and took him into his service. Before he was twenty, however, he had determined to be an actor, but after six years' training, and in spite of the patronage of Congreve, he made little advance, until, in 1696, he brought out his first comedy of *Love's Last Shift*, and began to attract more attention. He supplied the declining stage with pieces of all kinds, and from 1708 to 1733 was one of the managers of Drury Lane Theatre. He continued to act even in old age, his last appearance being in the part of Pandulph, in his own tragedy of *Papal Tyranny*, in February 1745. On the death of the Rev. Lawrence Eusden (. . .–1730), Cibber was appointed poet-laureate, and began to produce deplorable birthday odes. In the course of his life, Cibber produced a very large number of dramatic pieces, of which he published about thirty. He succeeded best in social comedy, and his *Careless Husband* (1706), and *The Nonjuror* (1718), display his easy talent at its brightest; it is to the credit of his plays that they are far more decent than those of his predecessors and early contemporaries. Cibber is remembered, however, less for his dramatic writings than for his pamphlet controversy (1742–44) with Pope, in which, to a surprising degree, he got the better of the eminent antagonist who so rashly attacked him; and for his *Apology* (1740), an autobiography delightful in itself, and precious for the information which it supplies regarding the theatrical life of an obscure and yet very interesting period (1690–1730). Colley Cibber lived until the 12th of December 1757, having reached his eighty-seventh year. He died in his house at Islington, painlessly and suddenly, after a life "passed in the utmost ease, gaiety, and good-humour," and was buried in the vault of the Danish church in Whitechapel.

Thomas Southerne (1660–1746) was born at Oxmantown in co. Dublin in 1660. After spending a few months at Trinity College, he left Ireland and became in 1678 a student of the Middle Temple. He then proceeded to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1683. A year earlier, however, he had begun his career as a dramatist with *The Loyal Brother*, a highly successful tragedy. Of his numerous plays—several of which enjoyed very large pecuniary success—the most famous were *The Fatal Marriage*, 1694, and *Oroonoko*, 1696. Southerne was a soldier, and rose to be captain in an infantry regiment. The last twenty years of his life were spent in repose in Westminster, and he, who in his youth had been intimate with Dryden, survived to be an object of respectful interest to Gray.

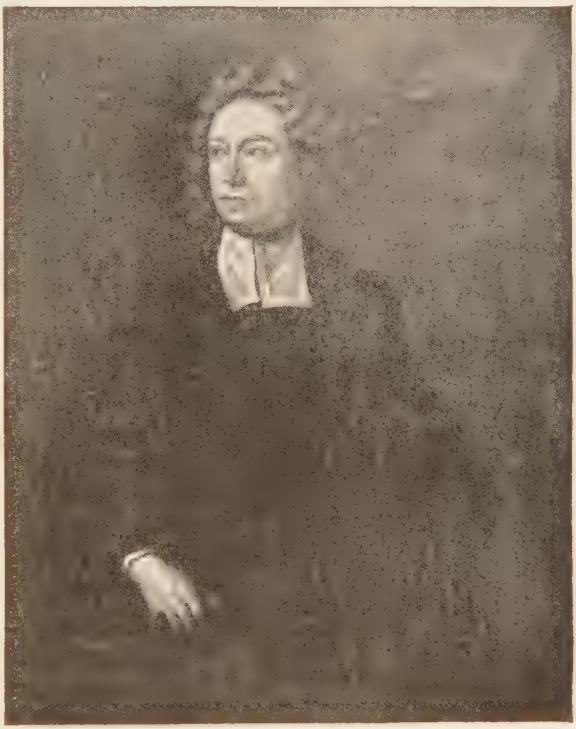
Susanna Freeman, known as **Mrs. Centlivre** (1680–1723), after romantic adventures—she spent some months disguised as a young man in a Cambridge college—took to the stage in 1700 as author and actress. In the latter capacity she had little talent; in the former she enjoyed much success, and published nineteen plays, of which *The Busy Body* (1709), and *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* (1718), have genuine vivacity, and display the last flashes of the social wit of Etheredge and Congreve. She married the Queen's cook, Mr. Joseph Centlivre, who had a house in Spring Gardens, where the dramatist died on the 1st of December 1723.

Bentley

No general survey of the close of the seventeenth century could be complete without a reference to the celebrated dispute as to what was called the Old and the New Philosophy. It occupied all the countries of Europe, but chiefly France, where the private sessions of the French Academy were torn with disputes about the relative importance of the ancient and the modern writers. It was raised very definitely by Fontenelle in 1688, and by Perrault, each of whom was on the side of the moderns. In this country, in 1692, Temple, with voluminous elegance and pomp, printed a solemn defence of the Greeks and Latins, and took occasion to praise, in terms of the most exaggerated hyperbole, certain *Epistles of Phalaris*, supposed to be written in Attic Greek by a Sicilian tyrant of the sixth century before Christ. Nobody possessed Phalaris, and to meet a sudden demand a publisher issued an edition of his text in 1695. RICHARD BENTLEY had somewhat contemptuously denied the authenticity of the *Letters*, and Charles Boyle, the editor, although he was himself a doubter, took occasion to charge Bentley with roughness and discourtesy. Bentley sharply defended his position in an extended Appendix to the second edition of William Wotton's *Reflections* in 1697; in this he expressed his contempt for the spurious *Phalaris* and for Boyle's editorial ineptitude. Boyle's Church friends replied with *Dr. Bentley's Dissertation Examin'd*, 1698, and this drew from Bentley the *Dissertation on the Letters of Phalaris*, 1699, which marks an era in the development of European scholarship. It is the most brilliant piece of destructive commentary that, perhaps, was ever published, and it revealed in Bentley a critic of an entirely new order. But even more extraordinary was the textual and verbal work of Bentley, whose discovery, as Bunsen has pointed out, is the science of historical philology. Into the controversy which raged around the phantom of Phalaris Swift presently descended; but he added nothing to scholarship, and what he gave to literature must be treated in the next chapter. Meanwhile it is not uninstructive to find Bentley closing these forty years of mainly critical movement with such an exact criticism of the ancients as no one since the days of Scaliger had approached.

Richard Bentley (1662–1742) was the son of a yeoman in the hamlet of Oulton, near Wakefield, in Yorkshire, where he was born on the 27th of January 1662. He went to school at Wakefield at ten, and at fourteen proceeded to St. John's College, Cambridge, as a sub-sizar. On leaving the University he became headmaster of Spalding School, and later on, in 1682, tutor to the second son of Dean Stillingfleet. In the Deanery of St. Paul's Bentley's life was now spent until 1689, and all this time he was

widening his already considerable knowledge of the Greek and Latin writers. When Stillingfleet was made Bishop of Worcester, Bentley took orders and resided in Oxford; here, while working in the Bodleian, his first literary schemes took shape. In 1691 he published his *Letter to Mill*, in which he proved himself "a new and brilliant light" in English classical criticism. In March 1692, he delivered his famous Boyle Lectures in the Church of St. Martin's in London. His criticism of Callimachus in 1693 proved him the finest intuitive scholar in Europe, and in 1694 he was appointed Royal Librarian.



Richard Bentley

After the Portrait by Sir James Thornhill

It is in evidence that already his great eminence had come too suddenly for Bentley's modesty to endure it. To some one who remarked on the young critic's powers to Stillingfleet, the Bishop replied, "Yes, had he but the gift of humility he would be the most extraordinary man in Europe." In 1695 the long controversy on the relative merits of the Ancients and the Moderns resolved itself in England into the controversy on the *Letters of Phalaris*, in which Bentley took a prominent part until at least 1699. The contest was brilliantly, but most unfairly, summed up by Swift in his *Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books*. Later, in 1699, Bentley was appointed Master of Trinity College, and Cambridge became his residence for the remainder of his life. He quarrelled almost immediately with the fellows about a college dividend, and being made vice-chancellor immediately vetoed the gaieties of Sturbridge Fair. From the first, he is accused of arbitrary and intolerant behaviour, and even if certain reforms were needful at Trinity, Bentley's manner of introducing them was extremely vexatious. Nevertheless, for ten years the fellows of Trinity endured him, even when, as Professor Jebb says, "he denounced them as the refuse of humanity because they dared to lift their heads against his insolent assumption of absolute power." At Christmas, 1709, they at length plucked up courage to beard the terrible Master, who flung out of the room, exclaiming: "Henceforward, farewell peace to Trinity College." Thereupon, indeed, began a period of extraordinary disturbance, in the course of which Bentley saw himself attacked by the University, the court, and the law, but through which, with an amazing pertinacity, he stuck to his principles and abated nothing of his pride. In 1724 his degrees, of all of which he had been deprived, were restored to him, and

he was offered the Bishopric of Bristol. He refused it, being determined to stay on at Trinity, and fight, and die. In 1734 he was sentenced by the court of the Bishop of Ely to be deprived of the Mastership. To the astonishment of every one he refused to go, saying: "Despoil others, but keep your hands off Hector." A compromise with the terrible man was effected, and in 1738 Bentley was finally left at peace. His *Manilius*, the last of his great critical productions, appeared the following year. On the 14th of July 1742, Bentley died of a pleuritic fever, in his eighty-first year, in the lodge of Trinity, and lies buried in the college chapel.

From Bentley's "Sermons."

Without society and government man would be found in a worse condition than the very beasts of the field. That divine ray of reason, which is his privilege above the brutes, would only serve in that case to make him more sensible of his wants, and more uneasy and melancholic under them. Now, if society and mutual friendship be so essential and necessary to the happiness of mankind, 'tis a clear consequence that all such obligations as are necessary to maintain society and friendship are incumbent on every man. No one, therefore, that lives in society, and expects his share in the benefits of it, can be said to live to himself.

No, he lives to his prince and his country; he lives to his parents and his family; he lives to his friends and to all under his trust; he lives even to foreigners, under the mutual sanctions and stipulations of alliance and commerce; nay, he lives to the whole race of mankind. Whatsoever has the character of man, and wears the same image of God that he does, is truly his brother, and, on account of that natural consanguinity, has a just claim to his kindness and benevolence. . . . The nearer one can arrive to this universal charity, this benevolence to all the human race, the more he has of the divine character imprinted on his soul; for *God is love*, says the apostle; he delights in the happiness of all his creatures. To this public principle we owe our thanks for the inventors of sciences and arts; for the founders of kingdoms, and first institutors of laws; for the heroes that hazard or abandon their own lives for the dearer love of their country; for the statesmen that generously sacrifice their private profit and ease to establish the public peace and prosperity for ages to come.

Burnet and North

Certain writers towards the close of this period took a prominent part in political and social life, but were not perceived, until long after their deaths, to have been leaders in literature also. Of these one, Pepys, of whom we have already spoken, was not known to his contemporaries to be a writer at all; others, of whom Gilbert Burnet and Roger North were typical, published indeed small works which attracted some attention, but are now remembered mainly by their secret and posthumous contributions to letters. Imperfection of delivery, balanced by daring of thought and freshness of matter, is the quality which strikes us in these composers of memoirs and private histories, who added a certain freedom to style in their unaffected and untrammelled notes of contemporary events. But it is worth observing that in these men—in Gilbert Burnet, in particular—we meet with a very early tendency towards a purely journalistic and non-literary form of expression, and that such a historian is really a sensational and highly polemical leader-writer born too soon, and forced to write history by the lack of a newspaper in which to air his prejudices.

Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715) was born at Edinburgh on the 18th of September 1643, and was educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen. He came to England, already

a brilliant scholar, in 1663, and made a short stay both at Cambridge and Oxford, before starting for Holland and France. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society at the age of twenty-one. In 1665 he received the Scotch living of Saltoun, and remained in Scotland until 1673, having twice refused an English bishopric. At last, at the express wish of the King, he came up to London, and ultimately settled in court as a royal chaplain. From this time forward, Burnet took an unceasing part in the whirl of ecclesiastical politics, and was a witness of innumerable curious events in the history of his own times. In 1688 he became Bishop of Salisbury, and died in London on the 7th of March 1715. Burnet was a pamphleteer of unceasing energy, but of the works which he published in his life only two reward the general reader, *The Life and Death of John [Wilmot], Earl of Rochester*, 1680, and *The Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale*, 1682, neither of them biographies in the ordinary sense, but specious introductions to fashionable theology. It is not by these, however, but by his copious *History of My Own Times* that Burnet lives. This valuable, but not very exhilarating, storehouse of state facts was not printed until 1723, with a second volume in 1734.

Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury
After the Portrait by John Riley

From "The Life and Death of Rochester."

He told me of another odd presage that one had of his approaching death in the Lady Warre, his mother-in-law's house: the chaplain had dreamt that such a day he should die, but being by all the family put out of the belief of it, he had almost forgot it, till the evening before at supper, there being thirteen at table, according to a fond conceit that one of these must soon die, one of the young ladies pointed to him, that he was to die. He, remembering his dream, fell into some disorder, and the Lady Warre reproving him for his superstition, he said he was confident he was to die before morning, but he being in perfect health, it was not much minded. It was Saturday night, and he was to preach next day. He went to his chamber and sat up late, as it appeared by the burning candle, and he had been preparing his notes for his sermon, but was found dead in his bed next morning: these things, he said, made him inclined to believe the soul was a substance distinct from matter, and this often returned into his thoughts. But that which perfected his persuasion about it, was, that in the sickness which brought him so near death before I first knew him, when his spirits were so low and spent that he could not move nor stir, and he did not think to live an hour; he said his reason and judgment were so clear and strong, that from thence he was fully persuaded that death was not the spending or dissolution of the soul, but only the separation of it from matter.

Roger North (1653–1734) was an antiquary and local historian of the eastern counties, who was an active lawyer until near the close of the century, and then, retiring to Rougham in Norfolk—where he died on the 1st of March 1734—devoted his leisure to local history, and to the biographies of his family. He published in his lifetime practically nothing, but after his death appeared in 1740 his *Examen*, and in 1742–44 his *Lives of the Norths*. Dr. Jessopp printed his *Autobiography* in 1877 and his *Correspondence* in 1890.

Throughout the period from 1660 to 1700 the word "criticism" has had incessantly to invade our narrative. Looked upon broadly, this was the least creative and the most critical of all the main divisions of our literary history. The Renaissance had finally departed; after a lingering illness, marked at first by fantastic conceits, then by utter insipidity, it had died. It was necessary to get hold of something quite living to take its place, and what France originally, and then England from 1660 onwards, chose, was the *imitatio veterum*, the literature, in prose and verse, which seemed most closely to copy the models of Latin style. Aristotle and Horace were taken not merely as patterns, but as arbiters. No feature was permitted unless classical authority for it could be produced, and it was needful at every step to test an innovation by the rules and the unities. Hence the temper of the age became essentially critical, and to discuss the machinery of the musical box more important than to listen to the music. Instead of the licentious use of any stanzaic form that might suit the whim of the poet, serious verse was practically tied down to the heroic couplet of two rhyming lines of five beats each. This had been mainly the creation of Waller in England, as the regular pendulous alexandrine was of Malherbe in France. Rhyme of this exact and balanced kind had been defended, even for plays, by Dryden, on the ground that it is that "which most regulates the fancy, and gives the judgment its busiest employment."

All this is much out of fashion nowadays, and to our impressionist critics, eager for sensations—for the "new note," for an "individual manner"—must seem preposterous and ridiculous. But a writer like Dryden, responsible for the movement of literature in the years immediately succeeding the Restoration, had a grave task before him. He was face to face with a bankruptcy; he had to float a new concern on the spot where the old had sunken. That uniformity of manner, that lack of salient and picturesque individuality, which annoy the hasty reader, were really unavoidable. Dryden and Tillotson, Locke and Otway, with their solicitude for lucidity of language, rigidity of form, and closeness of reasoning, were laying anew the foundations upon which literature might once more be built. It is better to build on Malherbe and Dryden, even if we think the ground-plan a little dull, than upon Marino and Gongora.

Unfortunately, in an age so closely set upon externals and the manipulation of language, it was likely that the inward part of literature might be neglected. Accordingly, while the subjects of the latest Stuarts were polishing their couplets and clarifying their sentences, they neglected the natural instincts of the heart. It was an age of active intellectual curiosity, but not of pathos or of passion.

The stage was for ever protesting the nobility of its sentiments, yet, save in *Venice Preserved*, it is difficult to find a single Restoration play where there is any tenderness in the elevation, and real tears behind the pomp of the rhetoric. The theatre was so coarse that its printed relics remain a scandal to European civilisation, and that the comedies of Otway and Southerne (for the tragedians were the greatest sinners when they stooped to farce) could ever have been acted to mixed audiences, or to any audience at all, can hardly be conceived. It would, of course, be very narrow-minded to judge the whole age by its plays. It had its pure divines, its refined essayists and scholars, its austere philosophers. But we cannot go far wrong in taking that redoubtable gossip Pepys as a type of the whole. It was not an enthusiastic, nor a delicate, nor an impassioned age, and we must not look for intensity in its productions. What we should admire and should be grateful for are its good sense, its solidity of judgment, and its close attention to thoroughness and simplicity in workmanship.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF ANNE

1700–1740

DURING the final years of the reign of William III., literature in England was in a stagnant condition. Almost the only department in which any vitality was visible was comic drama, represented by Congreve, Cibber, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. A vast quantity of verse was poured forth, mainly elegiac and occasional, but most of it of an appalling badness. At the death of Dryden, in 1700, only two prominent non-dramatic poets survived: Garth, who had just published a polished burlesque, *The Dispensary*, under the influence of Boileau's *Le Lutrin;* and Addison, whose hyperbolic compliments addressed to "godlike Nassau" were written in verse which took up the prosody of Waller as if Dryden had never existed. In criticism the wholesome precepts of Dryden seemed to have been utterly forgotten, and Rymer, a pedagogue upon Parnassus, was pushing the rules of the French Jesuits to an extreme which excluded Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Spenser from all consideration, and threatened the prestige of Dryden himself. In prose Bishop Burnet was writing, but he properly belongs to an earlier and again to a later age. Samuel Clarke and Defoe were beginning to write, Steele was beginning to feel his way, Shaftesbury was privately printing one short tract. On the whole, it was the lowest point reached by English literature during the last three hundred years. The cause of such sterility and languor can scarcely be determined. The forces which had been introduced in the first decade

Queen Anne

After the Portrait by Closterman

after the Restoration were exhausted, and it was necessary to rest a little while before taking another start.

But in 1702 Queen Anne ascended the throne, and her brief reign is identified with a brilliant revival in English letters, in the hands of a group of men of the highest accomplishment and originality. It must be noted, however, that this revival did not take place until the Queen was near her end, and that of the writers of the age of Anne but few had published anything considerable until within three years of her death. It would be historically more exact to distinguish this period in literature as the age of George I., the years from 1714 to 1727 being those in which some of the most characteristic works of the school were published; but the other name has become hallowed by long practice, and George I. certainly deserves as little as any monarch who ever reigned the credit of being a judicious patron of letters. It is interesting, indeed, to note that by 1714 almost all the characteristic forces of the age were started. Pope had reached his *Homer;* Swift was pouring forth tracts; Shaftesbury, Arbuthnot, Mandeville, and even Berkeley had published some of their most typical writings; while the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* had actually run their course. All this activity, however, dates from the very close of Queen Anne's life. Between 1711 and 1714 a great number of important works in prose and verse burst almost simultaneously from the London presses. It was as though a cloud which had long obscured the heavens had been swept away by a wind, which, in so doing, had revealed a splendid constellation. In 1702 no country in civilised Europe was in a more melancholy condition of intellectual emptiness than

Title-page of "Hortorum Libri," 1672, with Portrait of Rapin

England; in 1712 not France itself could compare with us for copious and vivid production.

Meanwhile, almost unperceived, the critic had begun to make his appearance, for the first time, in the form with which we have since been familiar. The French asserted that it was Castelvetro and Piccolomini, Italian writers of the end of the sixteenth century, who first taught that just comprehension of the *Poetics* of Aristotle in which modern criticism began. These scholars, however, were unknown in England, where it was the French critics, and, in particular, Rapin and Le Bossu, who introduced to us the Aristotelian criticism of imaginative literature. René Rapin, in particular, exercised an immense authority in this country, and was the practical law-giver from the last quarter of the seventeenth century onward. Rymer and Dennis founded their dogmas entirely on his *Reflections*, merely modifying to English convenience his code of rules. Rapin has been strangely forgotten; when he died in 1687, he was the leading critic of Europe, and he is the writer to whom more than to any other is due the line taken by English poetry for the next hundred years. The peculiarity of his *Reflections*, which were promptly translated into English, was, that they aimed at adapting the laws and theories of Aristotle to modern practice. As is often the case, Rapin was less rigid than his disciples; he frequently develops a surprisingly just conception of what the qualities of the highest literature should be.

The school of Rapin, who moulded the taste and practice of the young men who were to be the pioneers of the age of Anne, claimed for Aristotle the unbounded allegiance of all who entered the domain of verse. Every man of judgment was blindly to resign his own opinions to the dictates of Aristotle, and to do this because the reasons given for these rules are as convincing and as lucid as any demonstration in mathematics. But Aristotle had approached literature only as a philosopher; for Rapin they claimed the merit of having been the first to apply the Aristotelian principles to modern practice. The English disciples of Rapin accepted his formulas, and used them to give literature a new start, and thus Rapin came to be the father of eighteenth-century criticism. The first review of a book in the modern sense may be said to have been JOHN DENNIS'S tract on a fashionable epic of the moment, published in 1696; here was a plea for sober judgment, something that should be neither gross praise nor wild abuse. The subject of this tract was negligible, but Dennis presently came forward with dissertations on more serious forms of literature. Dennis has been resolutely misjudged, in consequence of his foolish attitude towards his younger contemporaries in old age, but in his prime he was a writer of excellent judgment. He was the earliest English critic to do unstinted justice to Milton and to Molière, and he was a powerful factor in preparing public opinion for the literary verdicts of Addison.

Sir Samuel Garth (1661–1719)

Sir Samuel Garth (1661–1719) was the son of William Garth, and was born at Bowland Forest, in Yorkshire, in 1661. He was educated at Ingleton, and then at Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he stayed from 1676 until he went in 1687 to study medicine at Leyden. He settled in London as a doctor, and took a considerable part, as a Whig, in current politics. Garth published in 1699 a heroic poem called *The Dispensary*, describing with farcical solemnity a controversy between the doctors and the apothecaries on the subject of medical relief for out-patients. This poem enjoyed a very great success. It was Garth who, in 1700, secured dignified burial for Dryden. He was one of the early members of the Kit-Cat Club, and wrote the verses which were engraved on its toasting-glasses. Of his other not very numerous productions, the topographical poem of *Claremont* (1715) deserves notice. Garth became a very rich man; he died after a short illness, on the 18th of January 1719. He was buried at Harrow. Pope said that "his death was very heroical, and yet unaffected enough to have made a saint or a philosopher famous."

Sir Samuel Garth

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

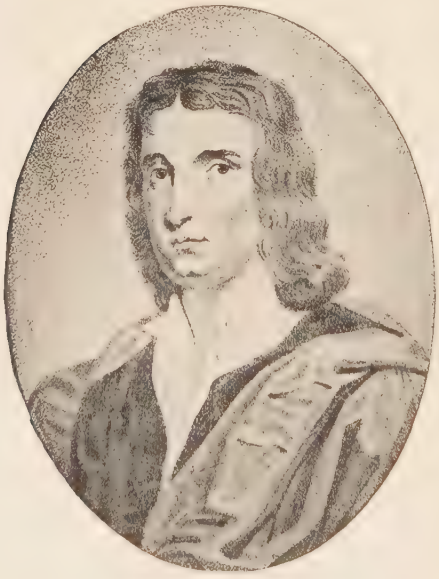
Anne Finch (1660–1720)

Anne Finch, Countess of **Winchelsea** (1660–1720), was the daughter of a Hampshire baronet. She became maid of honour to the Duchess of York, Mary of Modena, and at Court she met Heneage Finch, who was the Duke's gentleman of the bedchamber. They married in 1685, and when the flight of James II. took place, they withdrew to Eastwell Park. They lived here together in retirement for the rest of their lives. In 1712, through the death of a nephew, Finch became fourth Earl of Winchelsea. In 1713 the Countess published her *Miscellany Poems*, the occasional writings of thirty years. At Eastwell, Lady Winchelsea studied the phenomena of nature more closely than any of her contemporaries; in the contemplation of the physical world she sought and found relief from a constitutional melancholia, which greatly depressed her spirits. In her park there was a hill, called Parnassus, to which she was particularly partial, and here she wrote many of her poems. She and her husband—they called themselves "Daphnis" and "Ardelia"—lived in great contentment together in their country home until 1720, when the Countess died. The Earl survived until 1726. Lady Winchelsea's poems were first collected in 1902.

FROM LADY WINCHELSEA'S "NOCTURNAL REVERIE."

In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly view the heaven's mysterious face;
When, in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen;
When freshened grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence spring the woodbind and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows,
Whilst now a paler hue the fox-glove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes;
Where scattered glow-worms—but in twilight fine—
Show trivial beauties, watch their hour to shine;
While Salisbury stands the test of every light,
In perfect charm and perfect beauty bright; . . .
When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing thro' the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
While nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village-walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures whilst tyrant Man doth sleep.

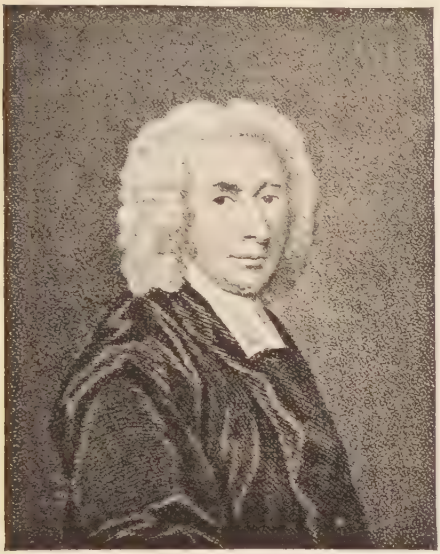
In this dead period Philips and Watts seemed poets, and were undoubtedly men of individual talent. **John Philips** (1676–1709), was born at Bampton on the 30th of December 1676. He made a special study of the versification of Milton, and published, imperfectly in 1701, completely in 1703, *The Splendid Shilling*, an admirable study in parody of the blank verse of his master. His other works were serious—*Blenheim* in 1705 and *Cider* in 1708, the latter being the earliest and one of the best of the closely-observed, semi-didactic, semi-descriptive poems for which the eighteenth century was later on to be conspicuous. Philips, whose constitution was consumptive and asthmatical, died prematurely on the 15th of February 1709. He lacked no honour, being buried in Hereford Cathedral, with a monument, the inscription on which was composed by Atterbury, in Westminster Abbey.



John Philips
After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

Less of a poet than Philips, **Isaac Watts** (1674–1748), "a man who never wrote but for a good purpose," is far better known to the public. He was born at Southampton on the 17th of July 1674,

and was precocious from his infancy. His father was a Dissenter, and Isaac, though tempted to go to Oxford, chose to take his lot with his own people. His famous hymns originally appeared as *Horæ Lyricæ* in 1705; his no less famous *Psalms of David* in 1719. In prose he published a treatise on *Logic* and another on *The Improvement of the Mind*. In opening the doors of easy and graceful literature to the lower middle-class public the services of Watts were inestimable, and his name, although certain associations with it may provoke a smile, should always be mentioned with honour in connection with the popularisation of English letters. The laborious and useful life of Isaac Watts closed on the 25th of November 1748. Twenty years earlier he had been made a D.D. by the universities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen.



Isaac Watts

From an original Portrait

John Dennis (1657–1734)

John Dennis (1657–1734) was the son of a wealthy London saddler, who sent him to school at Harrow, and in 1675 to Caius College, Cambridge. He took his bachelor's degree, but was dismissed from the university before he had proceeded to his master's degree, for stabbing a fellow-graduate, in March 1680. He spent several years in France and Italy. In 1691 his first poem was published, an Ode to the King. His *Miscellanies*, in 1693, opened to Dennis the world of letters, and he became intimate with Wycherley, Dryden, and the youthful Congreve. The violence of his temper and his want of practical judgment were always bringing him into difficulties. In 1696 he first came forward in his proper capacity, as a critic of poetry, and for some time after the death of Dryden, Dennis was incontestably the best judge of literature living in England. In 1702 he lost his private fortune, but, on Lord Halifax's advice, managed to save enough to buy himself a small annuity. His position in society, however, was gone, and his work soon began to show an acerbity and peevishness which were doubtless the results of misfortune. He made mistake upon mistake, and his crowning error of judgment was his attempt to browbeat Pope, in the flush of his youthful success. For this he was punished with the deathless satire on

John Dennis

From Van der Gucht's Engraving

"tremendous Appius," a reference to a tragedy of *Appius and Virginia* that Dennis had brought out in 1709. He entered into a disastrous controversy with Pope, in which he was led to call that poet "a hunch-backed toad" who was ready "to fasten his teeth and claws" into any one who attacked him. Dennis went on to attack Addison also, and in fact degenerated into a common scold. He outlived his annuity as well as his reputation, and died in poverty, on the 6th of January 1734, soon after a benefit performance; for this Pope had written a prologue, in which he had called Dennis, benevolently, "Belisarius old and blind," and the hatchet had at last been buried.

It is not to be supposed that critics of the prestige of Dennis or Rymer would address the public from a less dignified stage than that of a book, or, at worst, a sixpenny pamphlet. But at the close of the reign of William III. we meet with the earliest apparition of literary criticism in periodical publications. In other words, the newspaper was now beginning to take literary form, and the introduction of such a factor must not be left unmentioned here. The first reviews printed in an English newspaper were those appended by Dunton to *The Athenian Gazette* in 1691; but these were not original, they were simply translated out of the *Journal des Savans*. Notices of books, in the modern sense, began to be introduced very timidly into some of the news-sheets about the year 1701. Nor was this the only direction in which literary journalism was started; men of real importance began to take part in newspaper-writing, and the English press may name among the earliest of its distinguished servants such personages as Atterbury, Kennet, Hoadley, and Defoe.

n Dunton
59–1733)

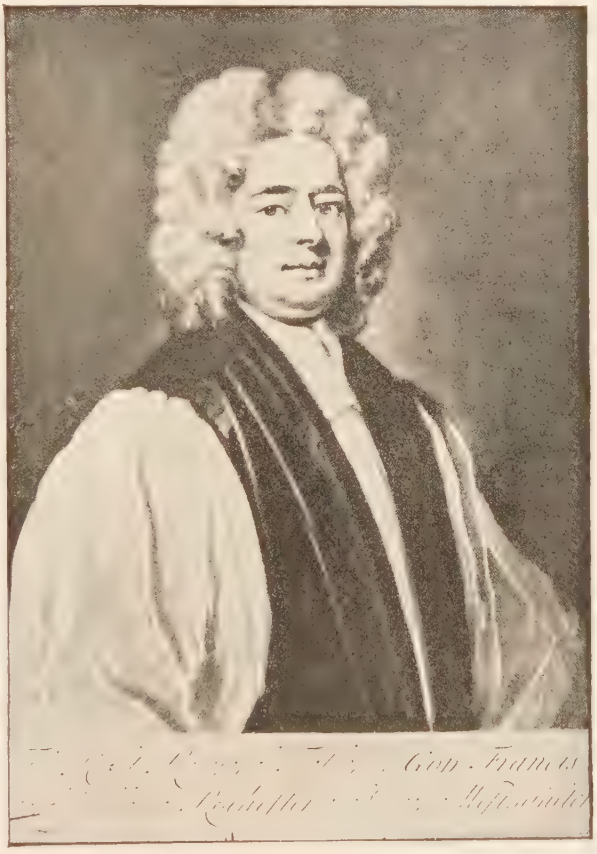
JOHN DUNTON,
Born 1659 *Died 1733.*

John Dunton (1659–1733) was born at Graffham, in Hunts, 4th May 1659. He was the son of a clergyman of the same name. His mother died before he was a year old, and his father threw up his living and went to Ireland. At the age of fourteen the son was apprenticed to a London bookseller. About 1680 Dunton set up in business as a printer and bookseller on his own account, and for the first five years was very successful. At the outburst of Monmouth's rebellion he went for a year to America, and then wandered on the Continent, not returning to London until the end of 1688. He says that in the course of his life he published six hundred books, and repented of only seven of them. Of his various speculative projects, one,

The Athenian Gazette or *Mercury*, was remarkable. In 1705 he published an odd but curious and even valuable autobiography, called *Life and Errors of John Dunton*. He fell into poverty, and died, perhaps at St. Albans, about 1733. Dunton has been looked upon as the founder of the "higher journalism" in England. Some of his books have sensational titles, such as *A Cat may look at a Queen*, and *The Pulpit Lunatics*.

Francis Atterbury (1662–1731)

Francis Atterbury (1662–1731) was born at Milton Keynes, in Bucks, on the 6th of March 1662. He was educated at Westminster, and at Christ Church College, Oxford. His first publication was a Latin version of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1682). Atterbury stayed long at the university, until indeed he complained of his "hard luck to be pinned down to it." He was over thirty when he took orders, and became one of the chaplains to William and Mary. All this time Atterbury was actively engaged in controversy. In 1700 he was made Archdeacon of Totnes, and in 1704 Dean of Carlisle; in grabbing at the latter post he displayed an unseemly haste, which endangered his reputation. His promotion, however, continued without abatement, and in 1712 he became Dean of Christ Church, again with circumstances of "imperious and despotic temper," which caused him to be greatly disliked. He made Oxford, indeed, too hot to hold him, and "'twas thought advisable to move him" to be Bishop of Rochester in 1713. He aimed at the Primacy, but Queen Anne's death struck a fatal blow at his hopes. George I. had a personal dislike to Atterbury, and made no scruple of showing it. Atterbury grew more and more disaffected to the Government, and in 1722 was thrown into the Tower, charged with high treason. His trial before the House of Lords, in May 1723, was a very famous affair, and caused universal emotion in the country. Atterbury was found guilty by his peers, and was sentenced by the King to perpetual banishment. He passed to Brussels, and then to Paris, where he gave himself, save for his work in the service of the Pretender, entirely to



Francis Atterbury

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

literature, and died on the 15th of February 1731. Atterbury was a man of commanding character and great activity of mind, but by nature devoted to intrigue, and the victim of violent political passion.

While, therefore, we cannot claim for the opening years of the century the production of any masterpieces, and while its appearance, from an intellectual point of view, is to us quiescent, yet without doubt the seeds of genius were swelling in the darkness. In all departments of thought and art, Englishmen were throwing off the last rags of the worn-out garments of the Renaissance, and were accustoming themselves to wear with comfort their new suit of classical formulas. In poetry, philosophy, history, religion, the age was learning the great lesson that the imagination was no longer to be a law unto itself, but was to follow closely a code dictated by reason and the tradition of the ancients. Enthusiasm was condemned as an irregularity, the daring use of imagery as an error against manners. The divines were careful to restrain their raptures, and to talk and write like lawyers. Philosophical writers gladly modelled themselves on Hobbes and Locke, the nakedness of whose unenthusiastic style was eminently sympathetic to them, although they conceived a greater elegance of delivery necessary. Their speculations became mainly ethical, and the elements of mystery and romance almost entirely died out. Neither the pursuit of pleasure nor the assuaging of conscience, no active force of any kind, became supreme with the larger class of readers; but the new bourgeois rank of educated persons, which the age of Queen Anne created, occupied itself in a passive analysis of human nature. It loved to sit still and watch the world go by; an appetite for realistic description, bounded by a decent code, and slipping neither up into enthusiasm nor down into scepticism, became the ruling passion of the age. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries common-sense had been by no means characteristic of the English race, which had struggled, flaunted, or aspired. It now went back to something like its earlier serenity, and in an age of comparatively feeble emotion and slight intensity took things as they were. In Shaftesbury, a writer of provisional but extraordinary influence, we see this common-sense taking the form of a mild and exuberant optimism; and perhaps what makes the dark figure of Swift stand out so vividly against the rose-grey background of the age is the incongruity of his violence and misanthropy in a world so easy-going.

In chronological sequence, it should, perhaps, be the theology of the early part of the reign of Anne which should first attract us, but it need not detain us long. The golden age of Anglican theology had long passed away, and in the progress of latitudinarianism, culminating, through Locke, in the pronounced deists, literature as an art has little interest. A tolerant rationalism was not likely to encourage brilliant writing, the orthodox churchmen wrote like wrangling lawyers, and the non-jurors and dissenters, who produced some vigorous scholars later on, were now as dreary as their opponents. Of the early deists, Shaftesbury alone was a man of style, and him we shall presently meet with in another capacity. Among the theologians, the most

eminent writer was SAMUEL CLARKE, "the greatest English representative of the *a priori* method of constructing a system of theology." His once famous collection of *Boyle Lectures* long seemed a classic to admiring readers, and still affects our conventional notions of theology. Clarke, however, has few readers to-day, and his manner of statement, which resembles that of a mathematician propounding a theorem, is as tedious to us now as it was fascinating to the group of young controversialists who clustered round Clarke during his brief career at Cambridge. In the hands of Clarke and his school, theological writing followed the lines laid down for it by Tillotson, but with a greatly accentuated aridity and neatness. In the search for symmetry these authors neglected almost every other excellence and ornament of literary expression.

Samuel Clarke (1675–1729)

Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) was the son of an alderman and M.P. of Norwich, where he was born on the 11th of October 1675. He showed much precocity, and after being well grounded at the Norwich grammar-school, proceeded in 1691 to Caius College, Cambridge. He was one of the earliest to perceive the value of the "sublime discoveries" of Sir Isaac Newton, and he greatly contributed, at a very early age, to the establishment of the Newtonian philosophy. His original bent was for mathematics, but about 1696 he turned his attention to Hebrew, and determined to become a divine. He took holy orders, and in 1698 became chaplain to John Moore, Bishop of Norwich, in whose palace he mainly resided for nearly twelve years. Here he enjoyed every advantage for literary work, and the list of his numerous publications opens with the *Three Practical Essays* of 1699. His Boyle Lectures *On the Being and Attributes of God*, and *The Evidences of Religion*, were published in 1705 and 1706, and produced a great impression on contemporary thought. On the recommendation of the Bishop of Norwich, Queen Anne made Clarke one of her chaplains-in-ordinary, and gave him in 1709

Samuel Clarke

After the Portrait by John Vanderbank

the important living of St. James's, Westminster. The even tenor of Clarke's life was broken in 1712 by the controversy caused by his volume on the *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*. This work was accused of heresy, and in 1714 a formal charge against the author was brought before Convocation. From this time forth Clarke lay under a suspicion of heterodoxy, which he took little pains to remove, and his friends were unable to procure him any further promotion in the Church. He seems to have been a freethinker upon many points, although a sincere believer in the basal principles of Christianity. He continued to write much, and not to confine himself to theology. He published the *Optics* of his master Newton (1706), and the first twelve books of the *Iliad* (1729) in Latin versions on which he had expended great care. He collected his *Sermons* in 1724. He was invited to succeed Newton as Master of the Mint, and declined the offer. On the 17th of May 1729 Clarke died, with some suddenness, after preaching before the judges at Serjeant's Inn. He seems to have been an honest, modest, and amiable man, of quiet yet courtly manners, but subject to a certain timidity and reserve in the pushing of his thought to its logical conclusion. He was less a divine than a mathematician, treating theology according to Newtonian formulas.

If philosophy at the opening of the eighteenth century could give a better account of itself than theology could, it was mainly because the leading philosopher was a born writer. The third Earl of SHAFTESBURY has been strangely neglected by the historians of our literature, partly because his scheme of thought has long been rejected, and partly because his style, in which some of the prolixity of the seventeenth century still lingered, was presently obliterated by the technical smartness of Addison and Swift. With the meaning of Shaftesbury's doctrine of virtue, and with the value of his optimism and plea for harmony, we have nothing here to do, but his influence on writing in his own age and down the entire eighteenth century is highly important to us. Commonly as the fact is overlooked, Shaftesbury was one of the literary forces of the time—he was, perhaps, the greatest between Dryden and Swift. He died in 1713, two years after his miscellaneous treatises, written at intervals during the fifteen years preceding, had been published in those handsome volumes of the *Characteristics*. Shaftesbury's long residences in Holland gave him the opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the movement of Continental thought to an extent doubtless beyond any previous writer of English prose. The effect is seen on his style and temper, which are less insular than those of any of the men with whom it is natural to compare him. It is to be noted also that Shaftesbury was the earliest English author whose works in the vernacular were promptly admired abroad, and he deserves remembrance as the first who really broke down the barrier which excluded England from taking her proper place in the civilisation of literary Europe.

The writers who were to shine in prose immediately after the death of Shaftesbury were distinguished for the limpid fluency and grace of their manner. In this Shaftesbury did not resemble them, but rather set an example for the kind of prose which was to mark the central years of the

century. There is nothing about him which reminds us of the nobleman that writes with ease: he is elaborate and self-conscious to the highest degree, embroidered with ornament of dainty phraseology, anxious to secure harmony and yet to surprise the fancy. The style of Shaftesbury glitters and rings, proceeding along in a capricious, almost mincing effort to secure elegance, with a sort of colourless euphuism, which is desultory and a little irritating indeed, yet so curious that one marvels that it should have fallen completely into neglect. He is the father of æstheticism, the first Englishman who developed theories of formal virtue, who attempted to harmonise the beautiful with the true and the good. His delicate, Palladian style, in which a certain external stiffness and frigidity seem to be holding down a spirit eager to express the passion of beauty, is a very interesting feature of the period to which we have now arrived. The modern attitude of mind seems to meet us first in the graceful, cosmopolitan writings of Shaftesbury, and his genius, like a faint perfume, pervades the contemplation of the arts down to our own day. Without a Shaftesbury there would hardly have been a Ruskin or a Pater.

Anthony Ashley Cooper (1671–1713)

Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of **Shaftesbury** (1671–1713), was the son of the second Earl and his wife, Lady Dorothy Manners. It is more interesting that he was the grandson of the famous Lord Chancellor, whose brilliant and tragical career came to an end in exile in 1683. The second Earl was a young man of very poor physique and intelligence, "born," as Dryden said, "a shapeless lump, like anarchy." The first Earl, "in concern for his family," commissioned the philosopher, John Locke, to look out for a wife of "good person and constitution" for his only son. This he did, and, being already physician to the Ashley Coopers, not merely helped to bring seven sons and daughters into the world, but arranged everything for their education. The philosopher, in his autobiographical sketch, styles Locke "my friend and foster-father." At the age of three the future philosopher was formally transferred to the guardianship of his grandfather, who placed him with a learned lady, Mrs. Birch, to be grounded in Greek and Latin. He showed a great proficiency in study. When his grandfather died, he was sent, in 1683 (as Lord Ashley), to Winchester; but he was made miserable there by the roughness of boys and masters alike, and in 1686 he was allowed to go abroad, in the charge of a Scotch tutor. He "spent a considerable time in Italy, where he acquired a great knowledge in the Polite Arts." Lord Ashley avoided "the conversation of other young English gentlemen on their travels," and devoted himself with close assiduity to the study of painting, sculpture, and music. He spoke French, and probably Italian also, so fluently and correctly, that his being a foreigner could not be observed. Lord Ashley stayed abroad until he had become a finished connoisseur, and then, in 1689, returned to England, not, however, to engage in public life, but for five years more to devote himself to the study of literature. He "turned the Ancients into sap and blood."

In 1695 he seems to have considered that his intellectual apprenticeship was over, and he turned to practical life. He entered Parliament as member for Poole. When he made his first speech in the House "he could not utter a syllable of what he intended," but contrived to give so adroit a turn to his confusion, that his embarrass-

ment seemed intentional and a happy stroke of acting. After this, as long as his health permitted him to remain in Parliament, Lord Ashley was a power there, although he was hated by his opponents, the "apostate" Whigs, who "gave out that he was too bookish, because not given to play, nor assiduous at Court; that he was no good companion, because not a rake nor a hard drinker; and that he was no man of the world, because not selfish nor open to bribes." He became subject to asthma, and could not endure the fog and smoke of London, which was blown as far as his "little house" at Chelsea. He retired, with his father, to Rotterdam, where he met Bayle and other Frenchmen of light and leading. While he was in Holland, in 1699, his first work, the *Inquiry after Virtue*, was surreptitiously printed in England. After an absence of a year in Holland, Lord Shaftesbury died, and the philosopher succeeded as third Earl. He returned, and took a considerable part in politics, until the accession of Queen Anne, when the Whigs fell into disgrace. It was high time, for Shaftesbury's delicate health was again "mightily impaired by fatigues in the public affairs." He settled once more in Rotterdam, and stayed there, living very quietly, and devoting himself entirely to literature, until August 1704. He was now so much stronger that he ventured back to England, but after this time he very rarely attended the House of Lords. The improvement in his health was very provisional, and he soon became a confirmed invalid.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, second Earl of Shaftesbury

From the Portrait by Closterman in the "Characteristics"

From this time forth his leisure was almost entirely occupied in collecting material for and in writing his great book. He was urged to marry, as his only brother, Maurice, did not seem to have any intention of taking a wife. Shaftesbury was not unwilling to be persuaded, and, as Locke had selected a partner for his father, so Molesworth was deputed to find one for him. Meanwhile, his thoughts being directed to the tender passion, Shaftesbury fell in love, on his own account, with the unnamed "daughter of an old lord." It would have been a perfect match, except that the lady's fortune was too large, and Shaftesbury could not brook the charge of marrying for money. This was early in 1709, and six months afterwards a young lady was discovered, poor enough to satisfy the philosopher's fastidious conscience, a Miss Jane Ewer of Herefordshire. We hear nothing of her beauty, but she was well educated, and she possessed "the plain qualities of a good mother and a good nurse." They

were married late in 1709, and on the 9th of February 1711 their heir and only child, afterwards the fourth Earl, was born at Reigate. Fragments of Shaftesbury's great work had, by this time, been published, the *Letter concerning Enthusiasm* in 1708, *The Moralists* in 1709, *Advice to an Author* in 1710, all anonymously. In 1711, at length, he produced the complete work on which he had for so many years been engaged, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, in three handsome and costly volumes, with engravings after his own designs; the letters A. A. C., at the close of the preface, gave an indication of authorship.

The health of Shaftesbury could now no longer endure the climate of England, and in July 1711, in spite of the disturbed state of Europe, he determined to move to Italy. The Duke of Berwick very politely conducted him through his army on the borders of Piedmont, and Shaftesbury reached Naples in November. He seems to have felt extremely ill on his arrival, but he was still able to write and to enjoy the conversation of the *virtuosi* of Naples. His treatises on *The Judgment of Hercules* and on *Design* were composed at this time. A young Pole, called Crell, who acted as his secretary, has recorded that his increasing weakness and his despondency about public affairs in England did not interfere with Shaftesbury's "perfect cheerfulness and sweetness of temper." The fourth Earl, who wrote long afterwards a charming sketch of his father, attributes the surprising prolongation of Shaftesbury's life to "the excellence of the air of Italy and the uncommon care of my mother." He died at last, at Naples, on the 4th of February 1713. Shaftesbury, if universal report may be accepted, was one of the most gracious and lovable men who ever lived. His gentleness, his hospitality, his courage in the face of prolonged and hopeless ill-health, his gaiety and good humour, his absolute rectitude of conduct, public and private, were notorious, and even his political opponents suggest nothing against his character. "No philosopher," says the President of Corpus, "has ever attempted to show forth his philosophy in his life more completely than Shaftesbury."

Two paragraphs may give a slight indication of the style in which the *Characteristics* is written :—

> Nor is the enjoyment of a single beauty sufficient to satisfy such an aspiring soul. It seeks how to combine more beauties, and by what coalition of these to form a beautiful society. It views communities, friendships, relations, duties ; and considers by what harmony of particular minds the general harmony is composed, and commonweal established. Nor satisfied even with public good in one community of men, it frames itself a nobler object, and with enlarged affection seeks the good of mankind. It dwells with pleasure amidst that reason and those orders on which this fair correspondence and goodly interest is established. Laws, constitutions, civil and religious rites ; whatever civilises or polishes rude mankind ; the sciences and arts, philosophy, morals, virtue ; the flourishing state of human affairs, and the perfection of human nature—these are the delightful prospects, and this the charm of beauty which attracts it.
>
> Still ardent in this pursuit—such as its love of order and perfection—it rests not here, nor satisfies itself with the beauty of a part, but extending further its communicative bounty, seeks the good of all, and affects the interest and prosperity of the whole. True to its native world and higher country, 'tis here it seeks order and perfection, wishing the best, hoping still to find a just and wise administration. And since all hope of this were vain and idle, if no Universal Mind presided ; since, without such a supreme intelligence and providential care, the distracted universe must be condemned to suffer infinite calamities, 'tis here the generous mind labours to discover that healing cause by which the interest of the whole is securely established, the beauty of things, and the universal order happily sustained.

It is quite certain that the brilliant school of poets who began to make their appearance just as Shaftesbury was dying, owed to him the optimism of their religious and philosophical system. But it was mainly to the French that they were indebted for the impetus which started them; and if France had already made a deep mark on our literature between 1660 and 1674, it made another, not less indelible, in 1710. What the influence of Rapin, thirty-five years before, had done to regulate taste in England, and to enforce the rules laid down by the ancients, had not proved stimulating to poetic genius, and, with the death of Dryden, we have seen that poetry practically ceased to exist in England. When it returned it was mainly in consequence of the study of another Frenchman, but this time of a poet, Boileau, whose influence on the mind of Pope, carefully concealed by the latter, was really far greater than any critic has ventured to confess. There were certain qualities in Boileau which can but have appealed directly to the young Pope, who in 1710 was twenty-two years of age. Boileau had not been so closely wedded to pedantic rules as his friends the Jesuit critics were. He had insisted on inspiration, on the value of ceaseless variety, on obedience to the laws of language. The preface to the 1701 edition of his works is one of the landmarks of European criticism, and we can scarcely doubt that it awakened a high spirit of emulation in the youthful Pope. In it Boileau had urged that none should ever be presented to the public in verse but true thoughts and just expressions. He had declaimed against frigidity of conceit and tawdry extravagance, and had proclaimed the virtues of simplicity without carelessness, sublimity without presumption, a pleasing air without *fard*. He had boldly convicted his predecessors of bad taste, and had called his lax contemporaries to account. He had blamed the sterile abundance of an earlier period, and the uniformity of dull writers. Such principles were more than all others likely to commend themselves to Pope, and his practice shows us that they did.

We cannot think of the poetry of the age of Anne and not of Alexander Pope. As little ought we to analyse Pope and fail to admit what he owes to Boileau. The "Law-giver of Parnassus" gave laws, it is certain, to the hermit of Windsor Forest. The work of no other great English writer has coincided with that of a foreigner so closely as Pope's does with that of Boileau. The French satirist had recommended polish, and no one practised it more thoroughly than Pope did. Boileau discouraged love-poetry, and Pope did not seriously attempt it. Boileau paraphrased Horace, and in so doing formulated his own poetical code in *L'Art Poétique;* Pope did the same in the *Essay on Criticism*. Boileau specially urged the imitation of Homer on young poets, and Pope presently devoted himself to the *Iliad*. In *Le Lutrin* Boileau had written the best mock-heroic, till Pope, in closely analogous form, surpassed him in the *Rape of the Lock*. The *Satires* of Pope would not have been written but for those of his French predecessor; and even Pope's *Elegy* and *Eloisa*

can be accounted for in the precepts of Boileau. The parallel goes very far indeed : it is the French poet first, and not the English one, who insists that the shepherds of pastoral must not speak as they do in a country village. Pope's very epitaphs recall Boileau's labours with the inscriptions of the Petite Académie. That purity and decency of phrase which the school of Pope so beneficially introduced into the coarse field of English literature had been strenuously urged on Frenchmen by Boileau. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that it is not so much to Dryden, whose influence on Pope has certainly been exaggerated, as to the author of *Le Lutrin*, that the poetry of the age of Anne owed its general impulse, and its greatest poet the general tendency of almost every branch of his production. It is true that Pope told Spence that "I learned versification wholly from Dryden's works," his prosody being a continuation and development of that of Dryden; but in the use to which he put his verse, it was certainly the great Frenchman (who died two months before Pope's earliest important poem was published) that was his master. Walsh had told him, in 1706, that "the best of the modern poets in all languages are those that have the nearest copied the ancients"; but we may not doubt that it was through Boileau that Pope arrived at a comprehension of Horace, and so of Aristotle.

Alexander Pope and Martha Blount

After the Picture by Charles Jervas

For more than thirty years Pope was so completely the centre of poetical attention in England that he may almost be said to have comprised the poetry of his time. There is no second instance of an English poet preserving for so long a period a supremacy comparable to his. It is possible to defend the position that one or two other versemen of the age did some particular thing better than Pope, though even this requires argument; but it is quite certain that he alone excelled over a wide range of subjects. The

fact of Pope's poetical ubiquity, however, is rendered much less miraculous by the consideration that if he triumphed over the entire field, the area of that field was extremely restricted. There was never a period, from the Middle Ages till to-day, when the practice of verse was limited to so few forms as it was under the reign of Pope. Lyrical writing, save in the mildest and most artificial species, was not cultivated ; there was no poetical drama, tragic or comic ; there was no description of nature, save the merest convention ; there was scarcely any love-poetry ; no devotional verse of any importance; no epic or elegy or ode that deserved the name. Poetry existed, practically, in but three forms — the critical or satirical, the narrative or didactic, and the occasional — these three, indeed, being so closely correlated that it is not always very easy to distinguish them.

Mrs. Pope (the Poet's Mother)

From an original Drawing by Jonathan Richardson, formerly at Strawberry Hill

It was Pope's aim to redeem verse from unholy uses, to present to the reader none but true thoughts and noble expressions, and to dedicate the gravest form to the highest purpose. His actual practice was not at first so exalted. The boyish *Pastorals* scarcely call for notice ; but in the *Essay on Criticism* he achieved at twenty-one a work of rare grace and authority. He began where other poets have left off, and it is not a little characteristic of Pope's temperament that he should not open with strong, irregular verse, and push on to the comparative stagnation of the critical attitude, but should make this latter the basis of his life-work. The *Essay* is in most respects inferior to its French prototype, more hastily and irregularly composed, and with far less ripeness of judgment; but it is graceful and eloquent, and for the eighteenth century it provided an almost unchallenged code of taste. MATTHEW PRIOR in the same year, though more than twice the age of Pope, ventured upon the earliest publication of his poems, bringing from the close

of the seventeenth century a certain richness of style which we find not in the younger man. His ballads and songs, with their ineffable gaiety, his satires and epigrams, so lightly turned, enriched the meagre body of English verse with a gift, much of which should really be attributed to the age of Dryden. But Prior was not less closely related to the generation of Pope in his Horatian attitude and his brilliant Gallic grace. He was, however, but an occasional trifler with his charming muse, and had none of the younger master's undeviating ambition.

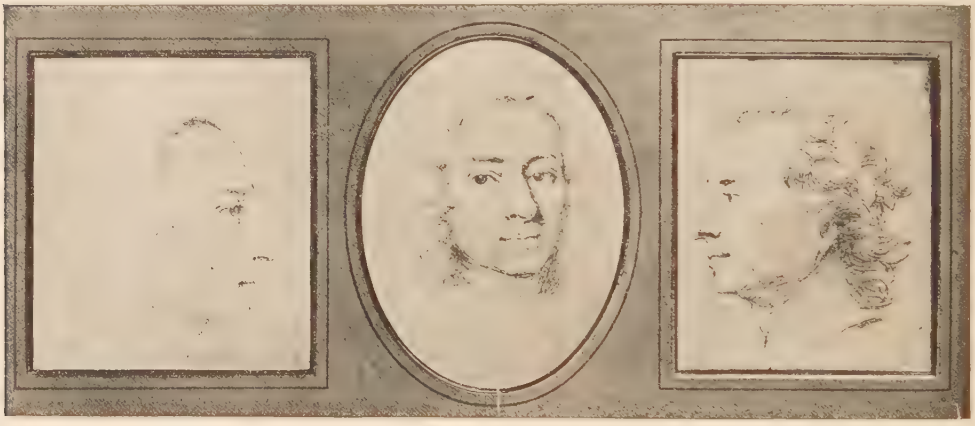
Title-page to the "Essay on Man," designed by Pope

From 1711, to follow the career of Pope is to take part in a triumph in which the best of his contemporaries secures but a secondary part. The *Rape of the Lock* lifted Pope at once to the first rank of living European poets. In lightness of handling, in elegance of badinage, in exquisite amenity of style—that is to say, in the very qualities which Latin Europe had hitherto, and not without justice, denied us—the little British barbarian surpassed all foreign competitors. This is the turning-point of English subserviency to French taste. Pope and his school had closely studied their Boileau, and had learned their lesson well, so well that for the future England is no longer the ape of the French, but is competent, more and more confidently as the century descends, to give examples to the polite world.

A few years later all the countries of Europe were taking these examples, and the imitation of Pope grew to be the rage from Sweden to Italy. Meanwhile, the youth of four-and-twenty was gaining mastery in his art. The *Messiah* reached a pitch of polished, resonant rhetoric hitherto undreamed of, and was a "copy of verses" which became the model and the despair of five generations of poets. Each of these productions stamped more definitely the type of "classical" versification, tone, and character, and all Pope had now to do was to enlarge his knowledge of human nature,

and to cultivate that extreme delicacy of phrase and rapidity of intellectual movement which were his central peculiarities.

He had early learned to master the art of poetry; but although he was already famous, none of those works in which he was to concentrate and illustrate the whole thought and fashion of his age were yet written. Pope was far more than the most skilful of versifiers: he was the microcosm of the reign of George I. There is scarcely a belief, a tradition, an ideal of that age which is not to be discovered lucidly set down in the poems of Pope, who was not vastly above his epoch, as some great poetical prophets have been, but exactly on a level with it, and from our distance its perfect mirror. But before he took up this work of his advanced years he gave the remainder of his youth to a task of high and fertile discipline. From 1713, when Swift



Alexander Pope

From Original Drawings by Jonathan Richardson at Windsor Castle

was going about begging subscriptions for "the best poet in England, Mr. Pope, a Papist," till 1725, when the *Odyssey* appeared, he was mainly occupied in translating from the Greek, or in revising the translations of others. His individuality was so strong, or his realisation of Hellenic art so imperfect, that he conceived a Homer of his own, a Homer polished and restrained to polite uses, no longer an epic poet, but a *conteur* of the finest modern order, fluent, manly, and distinguished, yet essentially a writer of Pope's own day and generation. The old complaints of Pope's *Homer* are singularly futile. It was not an archaistic or a romantic version that England and her subscribers wanted; they desired a fine, scholarly piece in the taste of their own times, and that was exactly what Pope was competent to give them.

But if they were the gainers by his twelve years' labour, so was he. The close study of the Homeric diction gave firmness and ease to his style, concentrated his powers, determined his selection of poetic material. What

Pope wrote during the Homeric period was not considerable in extent, but it included his only incursions into the province of love, the beautiful *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* and the *Eloisa to Abelard.* These years, however, marked the solidification of the school of which he was the acknowledged leader, even though some of its members seemed his enemies. Addison, his great rival, had published in 1713 his tragedy of *Cato,* in which the rules of Horace were applied with stringent exactitude, the result being of an exquisite frigidity. In the same year Gay came forward, a skilful and fairly independent satellite of Pope; between 1713 and 1726 contributing a copious and sprightly flow of short pastorals, songs, and epistles. The elegant Archdeacon of Clogher, too, Thomas Parnell, wrote with gravity and wit under the direct stimulus of Pope's friendship. He died in 1718, and the posthumous collection which his master issued four years later contained some harmonious odes and narratives which have not quite disappeared from living English literature. Tickell, who loved Addison and hated Pope, was writing, between 1719 and 1722, poems which owed more to Pope than to Addison, and in particular an elegy on the great essayist which is one of the most dignified funeral pieces in the language. Prior, who died in 1721, had finally collected his writings in 1718, and Swift ever and anon put forth an erratic fragment of vivid caustic verse. All this record of poetical activity dates from those years during which Pope was buried in Homer, but through it all his own claim to the highest place was scarcely questioned, although he was the youngest of the group.

"A Perspective View of Mr. Pope's Grotto"

From a Drawing by J. Serle

Alexander Pope (1688–1744)

Alexander Pope (1688–1744) was the son of Alexander Pope, a Catholic linen-merchant of the city of London, and of his wife, Edith Turner, whose only child he was; his father, who had married before, had a daughter much older than the poet. Alexander Pope was born, on the 21st of May 1688, in Lombard Street. His early childhood was spent at Binfield, near Windsor, to which village his father had retired, as is believed, on account of the harassing legislation which forbade Papists to live within ten miles of London. The child inherited a tendency to nervous headache from his mother, and a deformity of shape from his father; both parents were approaching fifty when he was born. He was a very amiable and charming child,

and from the sweetness of his voice was called "the little nightingale." Perhaps because he was a Catholic, perhaps because his health was poor, he received no regular education, though he had been at school at Twyford, near Winchester, and in London before, in 1700, he settled down eagerly to study at home, apparently without guidance, for five years. At seventeen he had so far overtaxed his strength, that he was obliged to give up reading altogether. His work must all this time have been desultory and partial, but he says that he read through "Homer, and some of the greater Greek poets in the original." Quite early, too, he began to write verses; "I lisped in numbers," he says, "for the numbers came." Before he was fifteen, he wrote an epic poem, *Aleander, Prince of Rhodes*, which he afterwards destroyed. All other professions being closed to him by law, Pope early thought of literature as a means of gaining a livelihood, although his father's

A View of Pope's Villa at Twickenham

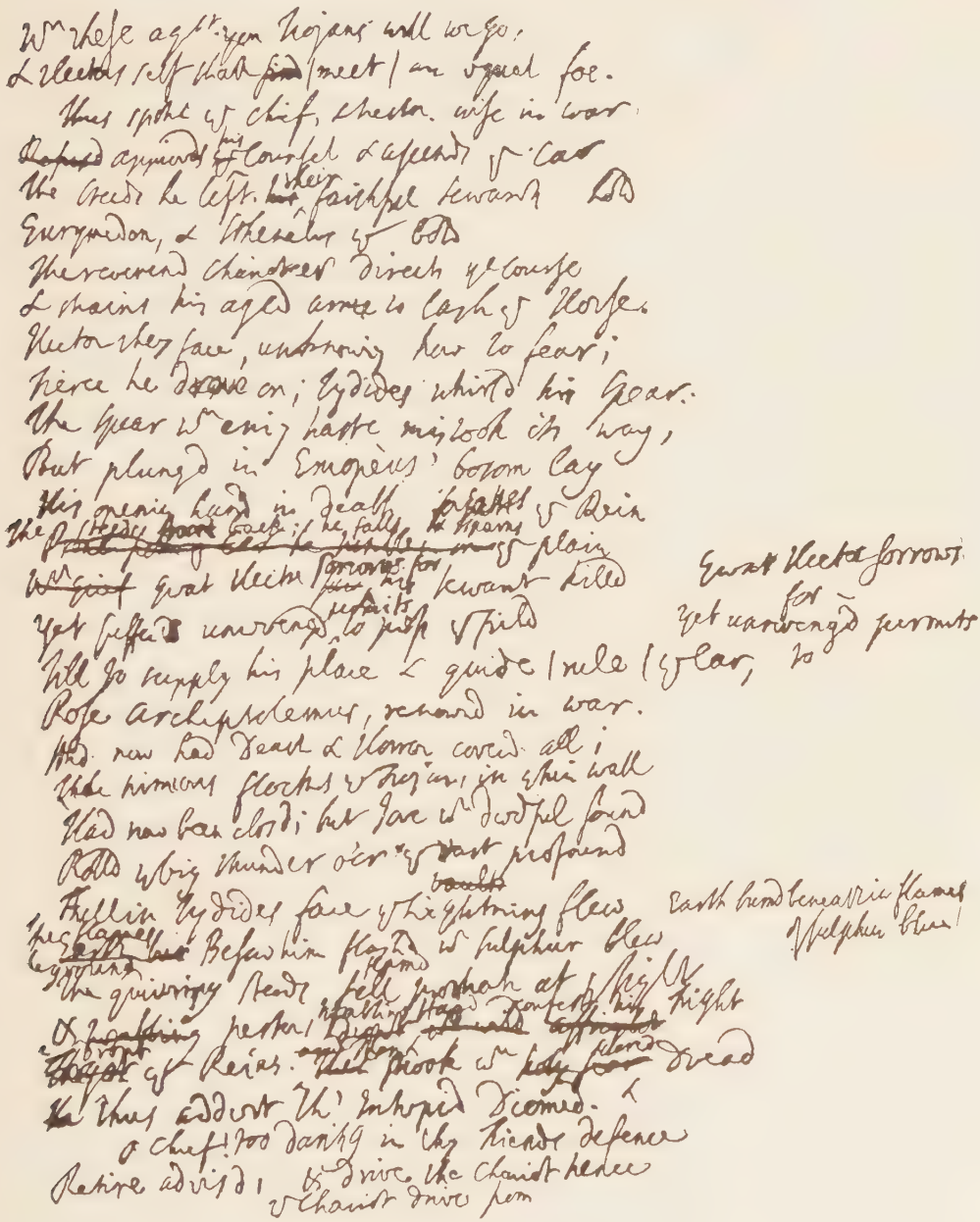
From Rysbrach's Engraving

slender fortune gave him no present anxiety. He made influential friends, the Blounts of Mapledurham, Sir W. Trumbull, Walsh (who suggested to him a close study of versification), Henry Cromwell (who corresponded with him), the veteran poet Wycherley (who submitted his senile effusions to the boy's correction). The relations with the last-mentioned occupied 1706 and 1707, when Pope was in his nineteenth year, and continued less intimately until 1710, when they were closed by a quarrel which differences of age and temper made inevitable. In 1709 Pope began to be known as a poet by his *Pastorals*, and during the next six years his fame rose with a regularity and a speed scarcely to be matched elsewhere in the history of literature. In 1711 he published his earliest important poem, the *Essay in Criticism*, and in 1712 Lintot printed in his *Miscellany* the first draft of the *Rape of the Lock*, which made a great sensation. Always anxious to aim at perfection, and undistracted by Addison's indulgent praise, Pope rewrote this poem,

Alexander Pope.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY WILLIAM HOARE.

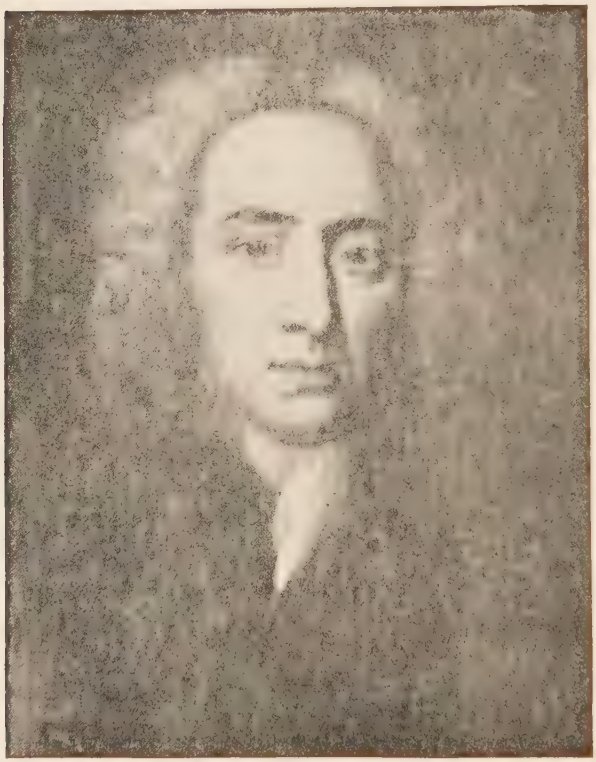
adding a "machinery" of gnomes and sylphs, with other adornments. In this form he published it, vastly improved, in 1714. Meanwhile, he had contributed to



Facsimile Page of the MS. of Pope's "Homer"

the *Spectator* his *Messiah* in 1712, and had published *Windsor Forest* in 1713; he had engaged in a hand-to hand fight with Dennis, much the most formidable critic of the age, and had pulverised him; he had found himself strong enough to

flout Addison and his powerful clique, and he had formed an alliance with Swift. In short, although the actual amount of his published writings was small, the quality of them was so extraordinary that at the age of twenty-six Pope was, without question, the most eminent man of letters in England, where letters had enjoyed so brilliant a revival. Meanwhile, he had begun to prepare his great metrical translation of Homer, a work which had been suggested to him, when he was still a boy, by Sir W. Trumbull. He had been receiving subscriptions for it for several months, when, soon after the death of Queen Anne, he discovered, to his exceeding wrath, that Addison had been urging Tickell to put forward a rival version. As a matter of fact Tickell's *First Iliad* and Pope's earliest instalment appeared simultaneously in June 1715. The inferiority of the former was so obvious that it greatly helped Pope, who, as Doctor Johnson said, "was meditating a criticism upon Tickell, when his adversary sank before him without a blow." Pope was none the less excessively incensed, and it is probable (though not certain) that it was at this time that he wrote the celebrated attack on Addison as Atticus, which was first published—and then not openly by Pope himself—in 1723. In November 1713, to return to Homer, Swift was informing polite society that "the best poet in England was Mr. Pope, a Papist," and was making everybody subscribe.



Alexander Pope

From a Portrait in the possession of Lord Leconfield at Petworth

From this time forward the anxiety to see the new version was intense, and the publication of the first of its six volumes a public event. The issue of the whole of Homer occupied eleven years (1715–1726), and Pope received nearly £9000, much of which he was able to invest, and so, "thanks to Homer, could live and thrive, indebted to no prince or peer alive." This work, although a translation or rather a paraphrase, awakened universal admiration, and may be styled the most important single work in *belles lettres* produced in the Age of Anne. Its effect upon taste was prodigious. The *Iliad* was translated entirely by Pope; but in order to complete the *Odyssey* he called in the help of two Cambridge poet-scholars, Elijah Fenton and William Broome, who between them performed half the task. With the latter of these colleagues he unfortunately quarrelled. The scholarship of Pope was far from

adequate and was challenged even at the time; yet the most severe critics agreed with Bentley that, if we must "not call it Homer," it was yet a "pretty poem." Pope knew very little Greek, "an awkward qualification," as Mr. Leslie Stephen confesses, "for a translator of Homer." In early days in London, Pope had attempted to live the gay life to which his years, but not his constitution, attracted him; he had called himself "the gayest valetudinaire, the most thinking rake alive." But after 1715 he began, although not yet thirty, to settle into middle life. He moved from Binfield to Chiswick in 1716, and in 1718, when his father died, to the villa at Twickenham which he made so famous, and where he resided until the end of his life. Here he "twisted and twirled, and rhymed and harmonized" five acres of garden until it became "two or three sweet little lawns, opening into one another, and surrounded with impenetrable woods." His mystic temples made of shells and his gimcrack obelisks are gone, but his grotto still remains to witness to his ingenuity. While he was settling in, he lived with the Chancellor at Stanton Harcourt in Oxfordshire, and published the fifth volume of his Homer. At Twickenham he cemented his old and now somewhat mysterious friendship with Teresa and Martha Blount of Mapledurham; in 1730 he spoke of the latter as "a friend —a woman friend, God help me!—with whom I have spent three or four hours a day these fifteen years." In 1717 Pope issued his works in one quarto volume, and this contained the first appearance of two important poems, *Eloisa to Abelard* and *To the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*. After this, for many years, his energies were wholly absorbed by his work with Homer, which he gradually grew to feel a burden. He edited Parnell's Works, with a fine epistle of his own, in 1722. When Homer was finished, Pope joined Swift, Arbuthnot, and Gay in the publication of two volumes of miscellanies (1727–28); the humours of this conjoint work set his mind running on satire, which he had lately neglected, and he began to prepare his elaborate and multiform lampoon, *The Dunciad*, which was appearing in many diverse conditions from 1728 till as late as 1742. This was a loud and sometimes a coarse burst of mockery directed at

William Walsh (1663–1708)

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

all the little scribblers of the hour, and at every one else who had awakened Pope's ill-humour by any sort of attack upon him. For twenty years he had been bottling up his resentment, and now he poured it forth in a glitter of liquid poison. The mortality among the Dunces was terrific. Meanwhile, using the *Dunciad* as a flood-gate, Pope was more seriously and artistically employed in storing up verse of a much more exquisite order. In 1731 he had published his epistle *Of False Taste*, and had read to Bolingbroke three books of a "noble work" on philosophy. This was the famous *Essay on Man*, which appeared in four instalments in 1733–34. From 1731 to 1738 Pope was publishing, in a rapid and continuous stream, imitations of the Epistles and the Satires of Horace, adapted to the mundane life of the early Georgian period. Among these, and destined to serve as a prologue to the double series, if it had ever been completed, was the splendid *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 1734, so rich in autobiographical detail. The general system upon which these poems were to take their appointed places in one great work fell through, however; but just as Pope was abandoning the idea, an adoring commentator arose in the shape of Warburton, who vindicated the ways of the poet to himself. By the means of this clever, unscrupulous divine, Pope was gradually weaned away from the influence of Bolingbroke, which had hitherto been supreme with him, and from this time he was, or at least believed himself to be, broadly orthodox. Warburton preserved his remarkable sway over Pope's mind until the death of the poet. During the last years of his life, Pope did not write much that was new, but polished his writings and re-arranged them for publication. His mother, to whom he was passionately attached, had died, at a very great age, in 1733, but Pope had Martha Blount with him to the last. Although he was only fifty-five, it became obvious in the early spring of 1744 that Pope was dying of old age; his bodily frame was quite worn out with asthma and dropsy. Friends gathered round him, Spence and Bolingbroke in particular. Quite clear in mind, it amused the poet to send out his Ethic Epistles to the last, and, as he smilingly said, to "dispense my morality as I lie dying," as he put it on another occasion, "of a hundred good symptoms." On the 30th of May 1744 he passed away painlessly and softly. He was buried—being, although the greatest poet of his time, yet a Catholic—in his family vault at Twickenham, not in Westminster Abbey. No English writer has attracted more curiosity, nor has

Martha Blount

From a Drawing by Gardner

interested more perennially successive generations of biographers. His figure is made very lively to us by a great variety of anecdotes. He was not blind to the peculiarities of his own physique; he did not disguise the fact that he had "a crazy carcase." He required to be lifted out of bed, and could not stand until he was laced into a sort of armour. Nevertheless he had great, but intermittent vivacity; when he was excited, he justly described himself as "a lively little creature, with long legs and arms; a spider is no ill emblem of him: he has been taken at a distance for a small windmill." His physical weakness, no doubt, was in great part responsible for a love of intrigue and even of downright trickery, which has made the unravelling of his correspondence an absolutely impossible task. This little brilliant man of letters, who had a host of admirable qualities, was an arch-deceiver and a miracle of half-hypocritical artfulness. For all this, poor man, his memory has been only too cruelly punished, and it behoves an honest reader to-day to think more of what was lovable and enlightened and impressive in the genius of Pope than of his ridiculous affectations and deplorable pettinesses. He was a very great man imprisoned in a little ricketty body which warped and pinched certain members of his mind. Let those who judge him harshly read the account of that long disease, his life, in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.*

Teresa Blount

From a Drawing by Gardner

FROM THE "ESSAY ON CRITICISM."

A little learning is a dang'rous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleased at first the tow'ring Alps we try
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
Th' eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
But, those attained, we tremble to survey
The growing labours of the lengthened way,
Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

"Belinda's Toilet"

From an Original Drawing by Benjamin West

BELINDA'S TOILET, FROM "THE RAPE OF THE LOCK."

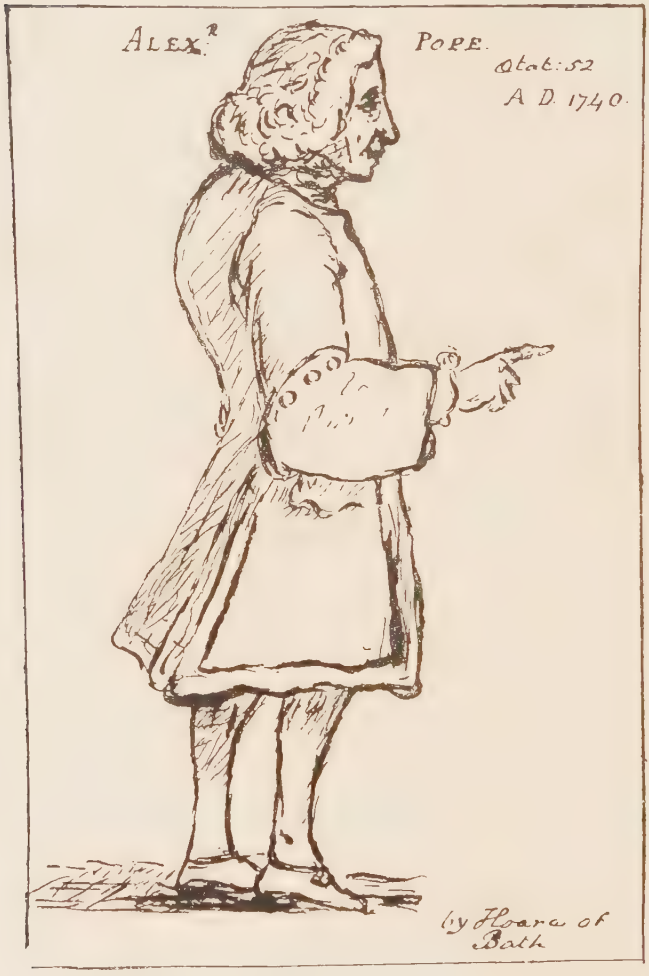
And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic pow'rs.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears ;

Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's praised for labours not her own.

From "The Messiah."

The swain in barren deserts with surprise
Sees lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise;
And starts, amidst the thirsty wilds to hear
New falls of water murm'ring in his ear.
On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes,
The green reed trembles, and the bulrush nods.
Waste sandy valleys, once perplexed with thorn,
The spiry fir and shapely box adorn:
To leafless shrubs the flow'ring palms succeed,
And od'rous myrtle to the noisome weed.
The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
And boys in flow'ry bands the tiger lead;
The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet.
The smiling infant in his hand shall take
The crested basilisk and speckled snake,
Pleased, the green lustre of the scales survey,
And with their forky tongues shall innocently play.
Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy tow'ry head, and lift thy eyes!
See, a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on ev'ry side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
See barb'rous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
And heaped with products of Sabæan springs!
For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,
And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow.

See heav'n its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day !
No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,
Nor ev'ning Cynthia fill her silver horn ;
But lost, dissolved in thy superior rays,
One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze



The only full-length Portrait of Pope

Drawn without his knowledge while conversing with Mr. Allen at Prior Park

O'erflow thy courts : the Light Himself shall shine
Revealed, and God's eternal day be thine !
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away ;
But fixed His word, His saving power remains ;—
Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own MESSIAH reigns !

From the "Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady."

What can atone (oh ever-injured shade!)
Thy fate unpitied, and thy rights unpaid?
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear
Pleased thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier.
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed.
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,
By strangers honoured, and by strangers mourned:
What though no friends in sable weeds appear,
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
And bear about the mockery of woe
To midnight dances, and the public show?
What though no weeping loves thy ashes grace,
Nor polished marble emulate thy face?
What though no sacred earth allow thee room,
Nor hallowed dirge be muttered o'er thy tomb?
Yet shall thy grave with rising flow'rs be drest,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow;
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade
The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.

From "An Essay on Man."

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind;
His soul, proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depths of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

From "The Dunciad."

In flowed at once a gay embroidered race,
And tittering pushed the pedants off the place:
Some would have spoken, but the voice was drowned
By the French horn, or by the opening hound.
The first came forwards, with as easy mien,
As if he saw St. James's and the queen.
When thus th' attendant orator began,
"Receive, great empress! thy accomplished son:
Thine from the birth, and sacred from the rod,
A dauntless infant! never scared with God.
The sire saw, one by one, his virtues wake:
The mother begged the blessing of a rake.

Thou gavest that ripeness, which so soon began,
And ceased so soon, he ne'er was boy, nor man.
Through school and college, thy kind cloud o'ercast,
Safe and unseen the young Æneas past:
Thence bursting glorious, all at once let down,
Stunned with his giddy larum half the town.
Intrepid then, o'er seas and lands he flew:
Europe he saw, and Europe saw him too.
There all thy gifts and graces we display,
Thou, only thou, directing all our way!

Title-page from "The Dunciad," 1728

To where the Seine, obsequious as she runs,
Pours at great Bourbon's feet her silken sons;
Or Tiber, now no longer Roman, rolls,
Vain of Italian arts, Italian souls:
To happy convents, bosomed deep in vines,
Where slumber abbots, purple as their wines:
To isles of fragrance, lily-silvered vales,
Diffusing languor in the panting gales:
To lands of singing, or of dancing slaves,
Love-whisp'ring woods, and lute-resounding waves.
But chief her shrine where naked Venus keeps,
And Cupids ride the lion of the deeps."

FROM THE "MORAL ESSAYS."

But all our praises why should lords engross?
Rise, honest muse! and sing the Man of Ross:
Pleased Vaga echoes through her winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Or in proud falls magnificently lost,
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.

Title-page from "The Dunciad," 1729

Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heav'n-directed spire to rise?
"The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies.
Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread;
He feeds yon alms-house, neat, but void of state,
Where Age and Want sit smiling at the gate;
Him portioned maids, apprenticed orphans blest,
The young who labour, and the old who rest.
Is any sick? the Man of Ross relieves,
Prescribes, attends, the med'cine makes, and gives.

Is there a variance? enter but his door,
Balked are the courts, and contest is no more.
Despairing quacks with curses fled the place,
And vile attorneys, now a useless race.
B. Thrice happy man! enabled to pursue
What all so wish, but want the pow'r to do!
Oh say, what sums that generous hand supply?
What mines, to swell that boundless charity?
P. Of debts, and taxes, wife and children clear,
This man possessed—five hundred pounds a year.
Blush, grandeur, blush! proud courts, withdraw your blaze!
Ye little stars! hide your diminished rays.

Stanton Harcourt in the Eighteenth Century

From an Engraving after Sandby's Picture

atthew
ior
64–1721)

Matthew Prior (1664–1721) was the son of a joiner at Wimborne Minster, in Dorsetshire, where he was born on the 21st of July 1664. The family moved to London, and the future poet was sent to Westminster School. While he was there, under Dr. Busby, the elder Prior died, leaving his wife so poor that she was obliged to take Matthew away from school. He was put to serve in the bar of the Rhenish Wine-house in Cannon Row, of which his uncle was the proprietor, and there Lord Dorset one day found the boy with a Horace in his hand. He told his fashionable friends, and it became a recognised amusement to go to the wine-shop to hear the vintner's boy read Latin poetry. With Lord Dorset's help he went back to Westminster School; he made friends with the young Montagues, and was much in the company of the elder of these (Charles, afterwards Lord Halifax). In 1683 Prior

accepted a scholarship at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he stayed many years. In 1687 he was engaged with Charles Montagu on the facetious pamphlet of *The Hind and the Panther Transvers'd;* this is said to have greatly annoyed Dryden, who had "always been very civil" to Prior. About 1690, having gradually grown dissatisfied with his position as the resident fellow of a Cambridge college, Prior, still under the tireless patronage of Dorset, began his career as a public servant. He was now for several years secretary to the Earl of Berkeley, our Ambassador at the Hague. He showed great ability as a diplomatist, and in 1698, after useful service at the Treaty of Ryswick, he was appointed Secretary to the British Embassy in Paris. Honours were now showered upon him, and in 1699 Prior came back to England an Under-Secretary of State. After a brief experience in Parliament, he went back to Paris in 1712 as Ambassador, but at the fall of the Tories he was impeached, and was kept in prison from 1715 to 1717. While in confinement he wrote his *Alma*. He left prison with nothing to live on but his college fellowship, and his friends set about to collect his poems and issue them in a sumptuous subscription folio. This was done in 1719, and Prior received £4000. Lord Harley gave him an equal sum to buy the estate of Down Hall, in Essex. The rest of the poet's life was spent in ease improving this pretty property. But his health was declining, and he did not enjoy Down Hall long. He died "of a lingering fever" on the 18th of September 1721 at Wimpole, where he was the guest of Lord Harley (the second Earl of Oxford). Prior was buried in Westminster Abbey, in a tomb surmounted by a fine bust by Coysevox. He was "a spare, frail, solemn-faced man," very grave in public employments, but, "alone with his friends, Lord, how merry was he!"

Matthew Prior

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

TO A CHILD OF QUALITY.

Lords, knights, and 'squires, the numerous band,
That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,
Were summon'd by her high command,
To show their passions by their letters.

My pen among the rest I took,
  Lest those bright eyes that cannot read
Should dart their kindling fires, and look
  The power they have to be obey'd.

Nor quality, nor reputation,
  Forbid me yet my flame to tell,
Dear five-years-old befriends my passion,
  And I may write till she can spell.

Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset, the friend and patron of Prior
After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

For, while she makes her silkworm's beds
  With all the tender things I swear;
Whilst all the house my passion reads
  In papers round her baby's hair;

She may receive and own my flame,
  For, though the strictest prudes should know it
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
  And I for an unhappy poet.

Then too, alas! when she shall tear
  The lines some younger rival sends,
She'll give me leave to write, I fear,
  And we shall still continue friends.

For, as our different ages move,
  'Tis so ordain'd (would Fate but mend it!)
That I shall be past making love,
  When she begins to comprehend it.

A Letter.

My noble, lovely, little Peggy
Let this, my First Epistle, beg ye,
At dawn of morn, and close of even,
To lift your heart and hands to heaven.
In double beauty say your prayer :
Our Father first, then *Notre Père :*

Prior approaching Down Hall

And, dearest Child, along the day,
In ev'ry thing you do and say,
Obey and please my lord and lady,
So God shall love, and angels aid ye.

If to these precepts you attend,
No Second Letter need I send,
And so I rest your constant friend.

his Table 3 times this year for want of Money to buy Provisions, that neither the Dauphin or Mons: Luxemburg are very well in Court, being both in with a Cabal of Women whom Madē de Maintenon rules, that their Grand Monarch is grown so gouty, poorish and superstitious (three admirable Qualities) y^t nobody knows what to do with him: that the Pope has given him one third of the revenues of the whole Clergy this year for the War, of which that body grows very weary, as the rest of France is:

I know not if any thing of this be worth informing You, or if You would have me ask Him any thing which may be judged for His Majesties Service: I shall (as it is my Duty) have an Eye upon the Main head, and as well in what regards the publick as in my private obligations to y^r Self endeavour to approve My Self

With great respect

Sir

Y^r most obed^t

and most humble Servt

I. Prior

I received Yesterday from England a box in which are Ld Lexington's Credentials to the Vizier which I shall forward to his Lordship as soon as I know how to do it safely

Extract from a Letter of Prior to Secretary Blathwayt

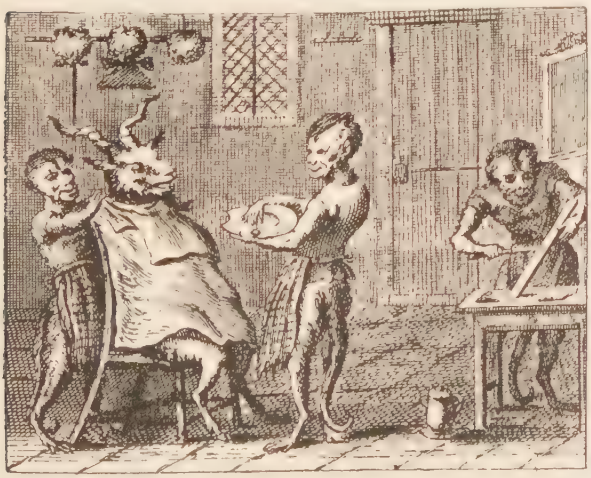
John Gay (1685–1732)

John Gay (1685–1732) was the youngest son of William Gay, of Barnstaple, where he was born in September 1685. The occupation of his parents is not known, but they were in fairly comfortable circumstances. He was educated at the Grammar School of Barnstaple, where his earliest verses, about a swallow shot in the churchyard, are said to have been written. Gay was early apprenticed to a silk-mercer in London, but was soon tired of the shop, "and easily persuaded his master to discharge him." His verses written at Barnstaple after his return were hidden in the arm of a chair, whence they were not dislodged until 1820. He went back to London, but little is known of his career until, in 1708, he published his first work, the imitative poem called *Wine*. In 1711 Gay formed the acquaintance of Steele and Pope, and thus entered literary society.

John Gay

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

In 1712 he was appointed domestic steward to the Duchess of Monmouth, and published his first notable work, *Rural Sports*, in 1713; the latter succeeded, although, as Swift said, Gay could not "distinguish rye from barley, nor an oak from a crab-tree." His "highest country skill" was fishing for gudgeons. A more important production, and one which holds a place in the history of literature, was *The Shepherd's Week* of 1714, a set of burlesque pastorals in which Gay exercised his genuine rustic talent while indulging

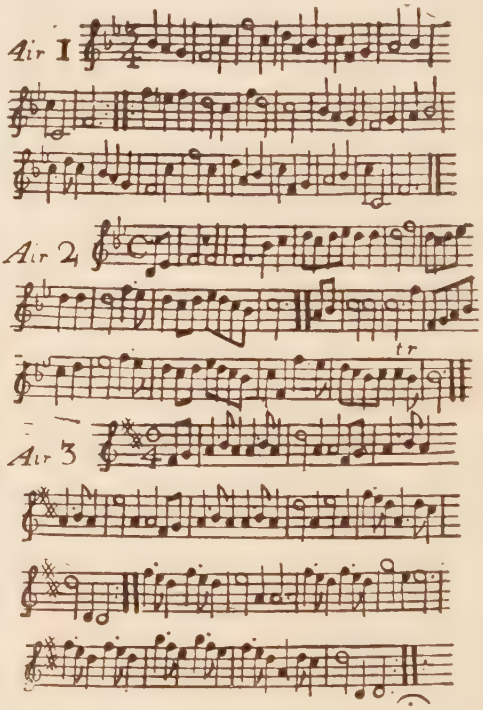


Engraving from the Illustrated Edition of Gay's Fables

Pope's resentment against Ambrose Philips. This year, however, was fatal to Gay's independence, for the Duchess discharged him from her service, an appointment in the household of Lord Clarendon fell through, and the poet was penniless. In 1715 Gay produced his entertaining "tragic-comic-pastoral" farce, called *The What d'ye Call It*, which enjoyed a great success, and his picturesque poem of *Trivia* in 1716. In these and succeeding years he seems to have led a parasitical life, visiting from house to house, and starving between whiles. In 1720 Gay collected his "Poems" in quarto and made £1000: with this he speculated on the Stock Exchange

Mrs. Crouch as "Polly" in Gay's "The Beggar's Opera"

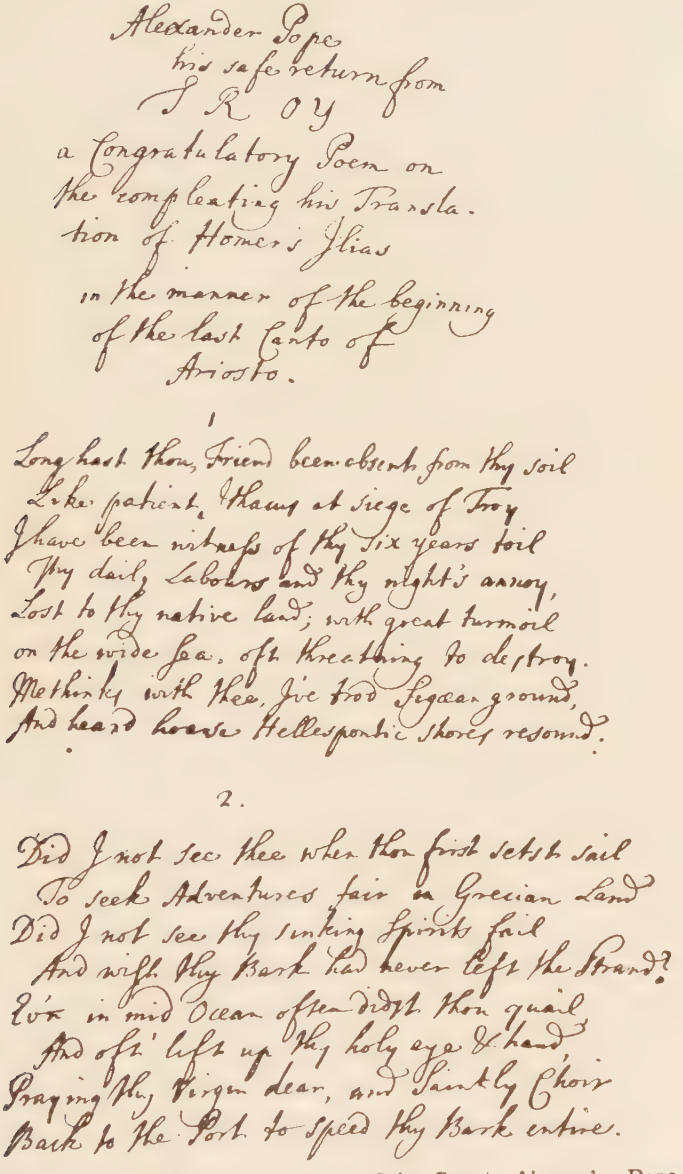
From an old Print



From the score of "The Beggar's Opera"

until he made it a nominal £20,000; the South Sea Bubble burst and Gay was once more penniless. He now began to be "always with the Duchess of Queensberry," and this amusing and brilliant lady became Gay's patron-in-ordinary. His famous *Fables* appeared in 1727; his no less famous *Beggar's Opera* in 1728, and the sequel, *Polly*, in 1729; these three books brought money, fame, and scandal to everybody concerned with them. After the publication of *Polly*, indeed, the "inoffensive John Gay became the terror of ministers and one of the obstructions to the peace of Europe," and Duchesses had to retire from Court for patronising him. Gay did not survive his successes long, but on the 4th of December 1732 died in the house of the Duke of Queensberry in Burlington Gardens. He was ceremoniously buried in Westminster Abbey, and after all his solicitudes he was found to have £6000

in his possession. "Gay dies unpensioned with a hundred friends," Pope sang, but it is not easy to pity him, for his early indigence was certainly the result of sheer indolence. Gay was amiable, merry, greedy, lazy, and a charming com-



Alexander Pope
his safe return from
T R O Y
a Congratulatory Poem on
the compleating his Transla-
tion of Homer's Iliad
in the manner of the beginning
of the last Canto of
Ariosto.

1

Long hast thou, Friend been absent from thy soil
Like patient Ithacus at siege of Troy
I have been witness of thy six years toil
Thy daily Labours and thy night's annoy,
Lost to thy native land; with great turmoil
On the wide Sea, oft threatning to destroy.
Methinks with thee, I've trod Scgean ground,
And heard hoarse Hellespontic Shores resound.

2.

Did I not see thee when thou first setst sail
To seek Adventures fair in Grecian Land
Did I not see thy sinking Spirits fail
And with thy Bark had never left the Strand?
Ev'n in mid Ocean often didst thou quail
And oft' lift up thy holy eye & hand
Praying thy Virgin dear, and Saintly Choir
Back to the Port to speed thy Bark entire.

From a Congratulatory Poem from John Gay to Alexander Pope on the completion of the latter's translation of Homer

panion. He loved good eating, smart clothes, and snug quarters, and he hated to work for them; he made himself agreeable to so many wealthy people that he had no need to do so. As some one said of him, he wanted a place with a handsome income and no duties, and to this ideal he practically, though never nominally, managed to attain.

THE PEDLAR.

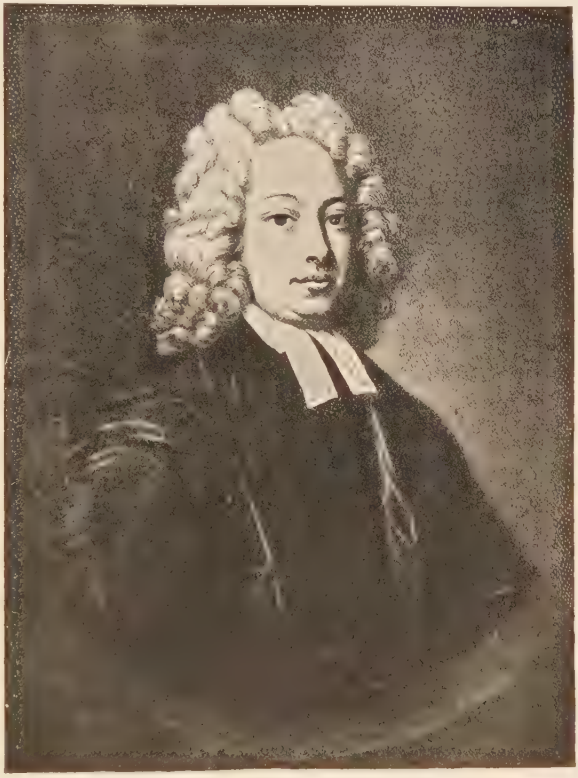
Now he goes on, and sings of fairs and shows,
For still new fairs before his eyes arose.
How pedlars' stalls with glitt'ring toys are laid,
The various fairings of the country maid.
Long silken laces hang upon the twine,
And rows of pins and amber bracelets shine;
How the tight lass, knives, combs, and scissors spies,
And looks on thimbles with desiring eyes.
Of lott'ries next with tuneful note he told,
Where silver spoons are won, and rings of gold.
The lads and lasses trudge the streets along,
And all the fair is crowded in his song.
The mountebank now treads the stage, and sells
His pills, his balsams, and his ague-spells;
Now o'er and o'er the nimble tumbler springs,
And on the rope the vent'rous maiden swings;
Jack-pudding in his parti-colour'd jacket
Tosses the glove, and jokes at ev'ry packet.
Of raree-shows, he sung, and Punch's feats,
Of pockets pick'd in crowds, and various cheats.

Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensberry
After the Portrait by Charles Jervas

Thomas Parnell (1679–1718)

Thomas Parnell (1679–1718) belonged to the well-known Cheshire family of that name; and his father was the Thomas Parnell of Dublin, ancestor of the first Lord Congleton, whose great-grand-nephew was the Irish leader. The poet was born in Dublin in 1679; his mother was Anna Grice of Tipperary, from whom, doubtless, he received his strong Irish characteristics. In 1693 he was admitted to Trinity College, Dublin, and remained there until he took his degree of M.A. in 1700. He was patronised by the great Whig divine, Dr. William King, who admitted Parnell to deacon's orders when he was below canonical age, and found him promotion. At the early age of twenty-seven Parnell was appointed Archdeacon of Clogher, and married a lady who, like his own mother, was of County Tipperary. He had two sons, who died

in childhood, and he lost his mother in 1709 and his wife in 1711. In consequence of the depression caused by these losses, he is said to have taken to heavy drinking, which shortened his life. By this time he had renewed a college acquaintance with Swift, and had acquired the friendship of Addison, Bolingbroke, Pope, and Steele. His earliest appearances in print were made in the form of a few essays contributed to the *Spectator* and to the *Guardian*. Parnell was now beginning to circulate among his friends copies of verses, which were greatly commended. Swift told Stella in 1712 that Parnell outdid "all our poets here by a bar's length," and he endeavoured to make Parnell known to the Ministry. In 1713 Archbishop King made the poet a Prebendary of St. Patrick's, and Parnell joined the Scriblerus Club. He wrote an essay on Homer as an introduction to Pope's *Iliad*. In 1716 King presented Parnell with the vicarage of Finglas, and the poet, who was rich, and already in failing health and spirits, resigned his archdeaconry. In 1717 he published *Homer's Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, in which the line which Pope was to take in his *Dunciad* was dimly foreshadowed. Parnell died, on the journey from London to Dublin, at Chester, and was buried there on the 24th of October 1718. Pope immediately set about collecting the scattered poems of his friend, including the most important of them all, *The Hermit*, but he did not publish them till the close of 1721, when the volume appeared with a beautiful dedication of the verses of the "once-loved" Parnell to Lord Oxford. He had been much beloved in spite of a splenetic and irregular temper, which gave anxiety and some annoyance to his friends. Parnell was always either exaggeratedly elated or in the depths of misery. His hatred of Ireland was equalled only by that of Swift. His works were first collected in 1758, with a posthumous certificate of genuineness from the last-named friend.



Thomas Parnell, D.D.

How deep yon azure dyes the sky,
Where orbs of gold unnumbered lie ;
While through their ranks, in silver pride,
The nether crescent seems to glide.

The slumbering breeze forgets to breathe,
The lake is smooth and clear beneath,
Where once again the spangled show
Descends to meet our eyes below.
The grounds, which on the right aspire,
In dimness from the view retire :
The left presents a place of graves,
Whose wall the silent water laves.
That steeple guides thy doubtful right
Among the livid gleams of night.
There pass, with melancholy state,
By all the solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as softly sad you tread
Above the venerable dead,
"Time was, like thee, they life possessed,
And time shall be that thou shalt rest."

Thomas Tickell (1686–1740)

Thomas Tickell (1686–1740) was the son of the Rev. John Tickell, Vicar of Bridekirk, in Cumberland, where he was born in 1686. He was educated at Queen's College, Oxford, where he mainly resided from 1701 to 1726. He introduced himself to Addison, by writing a copy of laudatory verses on the opera of *Rosamond*. When Addison went to Dublin in 1714, he seems to have taken Tickell with him as a private secretary. Tickell's translation of the first book of the *Iliad*, in June 1715, was a leading incident in Pope's famous quarrel with Addison. The latter made Tickell Under-Secretary of State in 1717, and at his death in 1719 designed his admirer and protégé as his literary executor. Tickell's famous and very fine elegy on Addison was not printed until 1721, when it opened the stately edition of Addison's Works which he edited. After 1723 Tickell spent much of his time in Ireland, keeping up his friendship with Swift. In 1726 he married, and so severed his connection with Oxford. He died at Bath on the 23rd of April 1740. Gray called Tickell "a poor, short-winded imitator of Addison," but once, in his elegy, he far surpassed his master.

Thomas Tickell

From an original Portrait

Pope emerged from Homer in 1725, ready to take his place again in militant literature. But the world was not the same to him. Of his elders and compeers half passed away while he was finishing the *Iliad*—Garth, Parnell, Addison, Lady Winchelsea, and Prior. Congreve and Gay grew languid and fatigued. The great quarrels of Pope's life began, and the acrid edge was set on his temper. But Atterbury had long ago assured him that satire was his true forte, and Swift encouraged him to turn from melancholy reflection on the great friends he had lost, to bitter jesting with the little enemies that remained to him. In 1728–29 the *Dunciad* lashed the bad writers of the age in couplets that rang with the crack of a whip. During the remainder of his life, Pope was actively engaged in the composition and rapid publication of ethical and satirical poems, most of which appeared in successive folio pamphlets between 1731 and 1738. It has been conjectured that all these pieces were fragments of a great philosophical poem which he intended one day to complete, with the addition of that *New Dunciad* (1742) which was the latest of Pope's important writings. Among these scattered pieces the most famous are the four parts of the *Essay on Man*, the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, and the successive *Imitations of Horace*.

In these poems of the maturity of Pope there is no longer any distinct trace of French influence. They mark the full coming of age of the English classical school. The lesson first taught by the Royalists who came back from the Continent in 1660 was now completely learned; criticism had finished its destructive work long before, and on the basis so swept clear of all the ruins of the Renaissance a new kind of edifice was erected. In the *Fables* of Dryden, in the tragedies of Otway and Congreve (the *Mourning Bride*), something was left of the sonorous irregularity of the earlier seventeenth century, a murmur, at least, of the retreating wave. But in such a satire as of the *Use of Riches* not the faintest echo of the old romantic style remains. It is not fair, in such a conjunction, to take passages in which the colloquial wit of Pope is prominent; but here are verses which are entirely serious, and intended to be thoroughly poetical:

> Consult the genius of the place in all;
> That tells the waters or to rise or fall,
> Or helps the ambitious hill the heavens to scale,
> Or scoops in circling theatres the vale;
> Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
> Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades;
> Now breaks, or now directs, the intending lines;
> Paints as you plant, and, as you work, designs.

Is this poetry or not? That is the question which has troubled the critics for a hundred years, and seems as little to be capable of solution as the crux of predestination and freewill. That it is not poetry of the same class as a chorus out of *Prometheus Unbound* or a tirade out of the *Duchess of Malfy* is obvious; but this is no answer to the query. Certain facts need to be observed. One is, that to several successive generations of highly

intelligent men this did appear to be poetry, and of a very high order. Another is, that since the revolution compassed by Wordsworth we have been living under a prejudice in favour of the romantic manner which may or may not be destined to last much longer. If another revolution in taste should overwhelm us, *Adonais* and *Tintern Abbey* may easily grow to seem grotesquely unreadable. It is wise, therefore, not to moot a question which cannot be solved, as Matthew Arnold tried to solve it, by calling "Dryden and Pope not classics of our poetry, but classics of our prose." Pope was not a classic of prose; he wrote almost exclusively in a highly finished artistic verse, which may evade the romantic formulas, but is either poetry or nothing. The best plan is to admit that it is poetry, and to define it.

In their conception of that class of poetry, then, of which the later works of Pope supply the most brilliant example, the English classicists returned to what the French had taught them to believe to be a Latin manner. They found in the admirable poets of antiquity, and particularly in Horace, a determination to deal with the average and universal interests and observations of mankind, rather than with the exceptional, the startling, and the violent. They desired to express these common thoughts and emotions with exquisite exactitude, to make of their form and substance alike an amalgam of intense solidity, capable of a high polish. If we had asked Pope what quality he conceived that he had achieved in the *Essay on Man*, he would have answered, "Horatii curiosa felicitas," the consummate skill in fixing normal ideas in such a way as to turn common clay into perdurable bronze. By the side of such a design as this it would have seemed to him a poor thing to dig out rough ore of passion, like Donne, or to spin gossamer threads of rainbow-coloured fancy, like Shelley. We may not agree with him, because we still live in a romantic age. It is hardly likely, moreover, that, whatever change comes over English taste, we shall ever return exactly to the Boileauesque-Horatian polishing of commonplaces in couplets. But to admire Ibsen and Tolstoi, and to accept them as imaginative creators, is to come back a long way towards the position held by Pope and Swift, towards the supposition that the poet is not a child dazzled by lovely illusions and the mirage of the world, but a grown-up person to whom the limits of experience are patent, who desires above all things to see mankind steadily and perspicuously. In its palmy days at least, that is to say during the lifetime of Pope, "classical" English poetry was, within its narrow range, an art exquisitely performed by at least one artist of the very first class. That this height was not long sustained, and that decline was rapid, will be our observation in a later chapter.

More durable has been the impress on our prose of the great critical contemporaries of Pope. One of the landmarks in the history of literature is the date, April 12, 1709, when Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff began to circulate his immortal lucubrations in the first gratis number of the *Tatler*. Here, at last, the easy prose of everyday life had found a medium in which, without a touch of pedantry, it could pass lightly and freely across the

The SPECTATOR.

Non fumum ex fulgore, ſed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut ſpecioſa dehinc miracula promat. Hor.

To be Continued every Day.

Thurſday, March 1. 1711.

I Have obſerved, that a Reader ſeldom peruſes a Book with Pleaſure 'till he knows whether the Writer of it be a black or a fair Man, of a mild or cholerick Diſpoſition, Married or a Batchelor, with other Particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right Underſtanding of an Author. To gratify this Curioſity, which is ſo natural to a Reader, I deſign this Paper, and my next, as Prefatory Diſcourſes to my following Writings, and ſhall give ſome Account in them of the ſeveral Perſons that are engaged in this Work. As the chief Trouble of Compiling, Digeſting and Correcting will fall to my Share, I muſt do my ſelf the Juſtice to open the Work with my own Hiſtory.

I was born to a ſmall Hereditary Eſtate, which I find, by the Writings of the Family, was bounded by the ſame Hedges and Ditches in *William* the Conqueror's Time that it is at preſent, and has been delivered down from Father to Son whole and entire, without the Loſs or Acquiſition of a ſingle Field or Meadow, during the Space of ſix hundred Years. There goes a Story in the Family, that when my Mother was gone with Child of me about three Months, ſhe dreamt that ſhe was brought to Bed of a Judge: Whether this might proceed from a Law-Suit which was then depending in the Family, or my Father's being a Juſtice of the Peace, I cannot determine; for I am not ſo vain as to think it preſaged any Dignity that I ſhould arrive at in my future Life, though that was the Interpretation which the Neighbourhood put upon it. The Gravity of my Behaviour at my very firſt Appearance in the World, and all the Time that I ſucked, ſeemed to favour my Mother's Dream: For, as ſhe has often told me, I threw away my Rattle before I was two Months old, and would not make uſe of my Coral 'till they had taken away the Bells from it.

As for the reſt of my Infancy, there being nothing in it remarkable, I ſhall paſs it over in Silence. I find, that, during my Nonage, I had the Reputation of a very ſullen Youth, but was always a Favourite of my School-Maſter, who uſed to ſay, *that my Parts were ſolid and would wear well.* I had not been long at the Univerſity, before I diſtinguiſhed my ſelf by a moſt profound Silence: For during the Space of eight Years, excepting in the publick Exerciſes of the College, I ſcarce uttered the Quantity of an hundred Words; and indeed do not remember that I ever ſpoke three Sentences together in my whole Life. Whilſt I was in this Learned Body I applied my ſelf with ſo much Diligence to my Studies, that there are very few celebrated Books, either in the Learned or the Modern Tongues, which I am not acquainted with.

Upon the Death of my Father I was reſolved to travel into Foreign Countries, and therefore left the Univerſity, with the Character of an odd unaccountable Fellow, that had a great deal of Learning, if I would but ſhow it. An inſatiable Thirſt after Knowledge carried me into all the Countries of *Europe*, where there was any thing new or ſtrange to be ſeen; nay, to ſuch a Degree was my Curioſity raiſed, that having read the Controverſies of ſome great Men concerning the Antiquities of *Egypt*, I made a Voyage to *Grand Cairo*, on purpoſe to take the Meaſure of a Pyramid; and as ſoon as I had ſet my ſelf right in that Particular, returned to my Native Country with great Satisfaction.

I have paſſed my latter Years in this City, where I am frequently ſeen in moſt publick Places, tho' there are not above half a dozen of my ſelect Friends that know me; of whom my next Paper ſhall give a more particular Account. There is no Place of Publick Reſort, wherein I do not often make my Appearance; ſometimes I am ſeen thruſting my Head into a Round of Politicians at *Will*'s, and liſtning with great Attention to the Narratives that are made in thoſe little Circular Audiences. Sometimes I ſmoak a Pipe at *Child*'s; and whilſt I ſeem attentive to nothing but the *Poſt-Man*, over-hear the Converſation of every Table in the Room. I appear on *Sunday* Nights at St. *James*'s Coffee-Houſe, and ſometimes join the little Committee of Politicks in the Inner-Room, as one who comes there to hear and improve. My Face is likewiſe very well known at the *Grecian*, the *Cocoa-Tree*, and in the Theaters both of *Drury-Lane*, and the *Hay-Market*. I have been taken for a Merchant upon

The first page of No. 1 of the "Spectator"

minds of men. The place which those newspapers hold in our memory is quite out of proportion with the duration of their issue. We hardly realise that the *Tatler* lasted only till January 1711, and that the *Spectator* itself, though started two months later, expired before the close of 1712. Three years and eight months sufficed to create the English essay, and lift it to an impregnable position as one of the principal forms of which literature should henceforth consist. In this great enterprise, the importance of which in the history of literature can hardly be exaggerated, popular opinion long gave the main, almost the exclusive credit to JOSEPH ADDISON. But the invention of the periodical essay we now know to have been RICHARD STEELE'S, and of the 271 *Tatlers* only 42 are certainly Addison's.

Jacob Tonson

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

In the *Spectator* their respective shares were more exactly balanced, and the polished pen of Addison took precedence. We gather that, of these immortal friends, Steele was the more fertile in invention, Addison the more brilliant and captivating in execution. It was cruel in Swift, and only partly true, to say that politics had turned Steele from "an excellent droll" into "a very awkward pamphleteer"; yet Steele could be awkward. "The elegance, purity, and correctness" which delighted all readers of the essays were contributed by Addison, and were appreciated in his own age to a degree which appears to us slightly exaggerated, for we have learned to love no less the humour and pathos of Steele. Without the generous impulse of Steele the unfailing urbanity of Addison might have struck a note of frigidity. Contemporaries,

who eagerly welcomed their daily sheet, in which Mr. Spectator retailed the reflections and actions of his club, did not pause to think how much of its unique charm depended on the fortunate interaction of two minds, each lucid, pure, and brilliant, yet each, in many essential qualities, widely distinguished from the other. "To enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality," was indeed a charming design when practised by two moralists, each of whom was witty in a different direction from the other.

The presentation of the first number of the *Tatler* to the town marked nothing less than the creation of modern journalism. Here, as in so much else, France had been ahead of us, for since 1672 the *Mercure* and its successors had satisfied the curiosity of Parisians as to things in general. *Quicquid agunt homines*, said the motto, and it was Steele who made the discovery for Englishmen that the daily diversion of the newspaper was one which might be made so fascinating and so necessary that the race might presently be unable to dispense with it. The earliest English newspaper is usually said to be that leaf issued in 1622, under the pseudonym of *The Weekly News*, by Nathaniel Butter; but the sheets of this kind, generically known as *Mercuries*, had little of the aspect of a modern journal. The *Intelligencer* (1663) of Roger L'Estrange had more of the true newspaper character, and began the epoch of the gazettes, "pamphlets of news," as they were called. The *Daily Courant* (1702) was the earliest daily journal. In all these precursors of the *Tatler* there had been scarcely a touch of literature. In his opening number Steele offered an unprecedented olio, combining social gossip, poetry, learning, the news of the day, and miscellaneous entertainment; and he appealed at once to a whole world of new readers.

The result was something of so startling and delightful a novelty that the town was revolutionised. At first the anonymity was well preserved; but in the sixth *Tatler* Addison recognised a remark he had made to Steele, and in the eighteenth he was dragged into the concern. As the periodical continued, and the taste of the public became gauged, the portion given to news was reduced, and the essay took a more and more prominent place. It was generally conjectured that this was due to Addison's influence, whose part in the whole transaction was the academic one of pruning and training the rough shoots that sprang from Steele's vigorous wilding. If Steele continued, however, to be predominant on the *Tatler*, Addison so completely imprinted his own image upon the later journal that to this day Mr. Spectator is an equivalent of Addison's name. The famous circle of typical figures, the Club, was broadly sketched by Steele, but it was Addison who worked the figures up to that minute perfection which we now admire in Will Honeycomb and Sir Roger de Coverley. So complete was the co-operation, however, that it would be rash to decide too sharply what in the conception of the immortal essays belongs to one friend and what to the other

In examining the light literature of a hundred years earlier, we were confronted by the imitation of Theophrastus, and now, in the *Spectator*, we meet with it again. The best of the modern Theophrastians was La Bruyère, and it were idle to deny that the characters of Addison were originally modelled on French lines. It would be a serious error indeed to think of Addison as a mere imitator of the *Caractères*, as Marivaux was later of the *Spectator*, but English criticism has hardly been content to admit the closeness of the earlier resemblance. Addison and Steele did not consider it their duty to satirise particular persons, and they possessed a gift in the dramatic creation, as distinguished from the observation, of types such as La Bruyère did not possess, or, at all events, did not exercise; but the invention of combining a moral essay with a portrait in a general, desultory piece of occasional literature was not theirs, but La Bruyère's. His field, however, was limited to the streets of cities, and he did nothing to expand the general interests of his contemporaries; he was a delightful satirist and most malicious urban gossip. But Addison and Steele had their eye on England as well as on London; their aim, though a genial, was an ethical and elevated one; they developed, studied, gently ridiculed the country gentleman. In their shrewdly civil way they started a new kind of national sentiment, polite, easy, modern, in which

THE

SPECTATOR.

VOLUME *the* FIRST.

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M DCC XLVII.

Title-page of the Collected Edition of the "Spectator"

woman took her civilising place; they ruled the fashions in letters, in manners, even in costume. They were the first to exercise the generous emancipating influence of the free press, and an epoch in the history of journalism was marked when, the preface to Dr. Fleetwood's *Sermons* being suppressed by order of the House of Commons, fourteen thousand copies of it were next morning circulated in the columns of the *Spectator*.

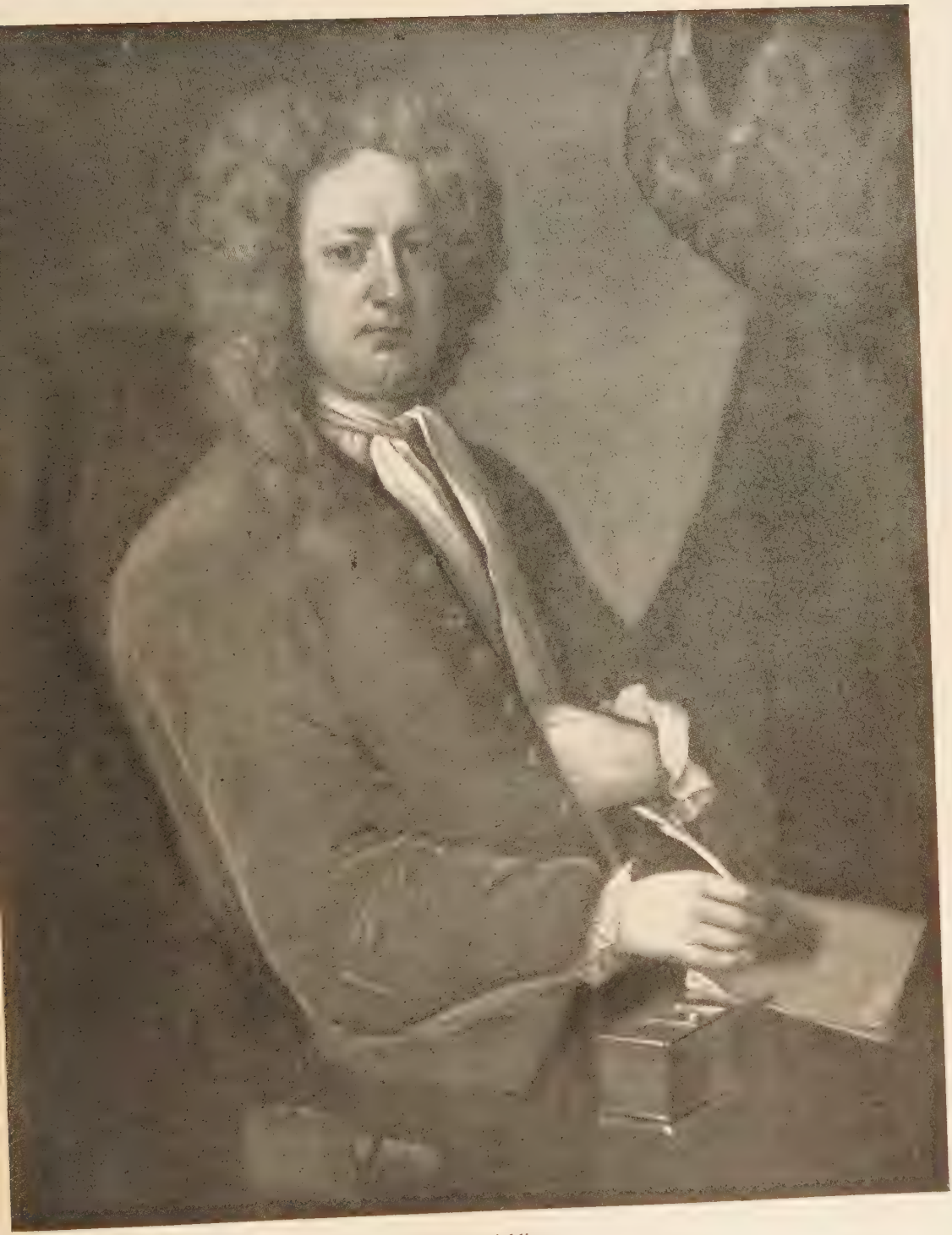
Joseph Addison
After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

In several ways, however, these marvellous journals were proved to be ahead of their age. When the *Spectator* ceased, at the close of 1712, there was a long obscuration of the light of the literary newspaper. Political heat disturbed the *Guardian*, and later ventures enjoyed even smaller success. To the regret of all true lovers of literature, Addison and Steele were presently at daggers drawn in opposed and quite inglorious news-sheets. But the experiment had been made, and the two famous journals may live all the more brilliantly in our memory because their actual existence was not too lengthy to permit them to come to life again in the more durable form of books.

Joseph Addison (1672–1719)

Joseph Addison (1672–1719) was the son of Lancelot Addison, afterwards Dean of Lichfield, a theological and narrative writer of merit. Joseph was born on the 1st of May 1672, at the rectory of Milston, in Wiltshire. He showed himself early to be the most gifted of a singularly accomplished family. He was sent to school at Amesbury, at Salisbury, at Lichfield, and finally at the Charterhouse, whence, in 1687, he proceeded to Queen's College, Oxford. Two years later, a copy of Latin verses, in praise of William III., attracted the attention of the authorities, but Addison was shy and studious at Oxford. In 1693 he made his entrance into the public world of letters by means of a poem addressed to Dryden, who was greatly pleased and returned the compliment; in 1694 Addison produced his *Account of the Greatest English Poets*. All this time he was at Oxford, being elected in 1697 a Fellow of Magdalen; and in 1699 he published

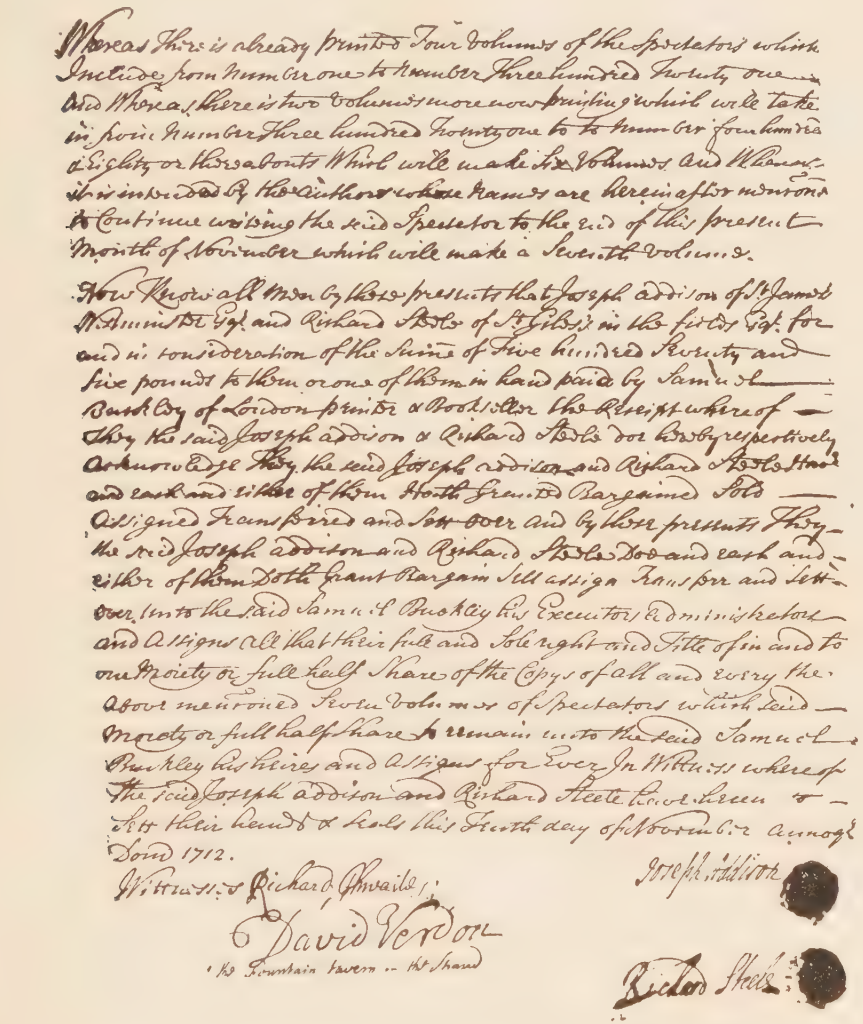
eight Latin pieces in a University miscellany. He now, at last, at the age of twenty-seven, left Oxford at the suggestion of the future Lord Halifax. He visited all that was most noteworthy in northern and central Italy, and passed through Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, not returning to England until late in 1703, after an absence of four years. In 1705 he published *Remarks* on what he had seen; and during his journeys he had written a good deal of an original kind which he slowly gave to the world. Addison was in great straits on his return to England, the death of his father and his failure, by what seems an odd want of adroitness, to secure a small appointment as travelling tutor to the Duke of Somerset's son, having landed him in great embarrassment. For some time he "lodged up three pair of stairs over a small shop," in a state of abject poverty, from which the success of his poem, *The Campaign*, saved him. He immediately received place under the Whigs, and was appointed in 1706 to an Under-Secretaryship of State. Addison entered Parliament in 1708, but the election was quashed a year later. Meanwhile he kept his post, and on losing it, on the last day of 1709, was immediately appointed Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Keeper of the Records. Before he went to Ireland, Addison became intimate with Swift, who prayed that "too much business may not spoil *le plus honnête homme du monde*," but unfortunately this friendship was soon damped by the violence of political party. In 1711, after the fall of the Whig Ministry, Addison found himself deprived of most of his places, and "an estate in the Indies worth £14,000," whatever this last may have been. He was nevertheless now no longer poor, and he bought an estate in Warwickshire, Bilton, for £10,000. To the *Tatler*, as published by Steele in 1709, Addison had meanwhile become a contributor, and Steele described his friend as performing that office "with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid—I was undone by my own auxiliary; when I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him." The *Tatler* ceased to appear on the 22nd of January 1711, and on the 1st of March of the same year Addison and he founded the *Spectator*, which was in every way a more composite and ambitious undertaking, and which enjoyed a prodigious success. It was dropped in December 1712. Addison had for many years past wished to produce a verse-tragedy perfect in classical form, and even while at Oxford he had selected the subject of *Cato* for it. As early as 1703 the play was finished enough to be shown by Steele to Cibber. One by one the friends of Addison saw the tragedy in manuscript, but all doubted its fitness for the stage. Pope expressed the general opinion when he said that the author "had better not act it, but would get reputation enough by only printing it." In 1713, however, the position of parties was such as to remind the group of friends of the familiar manuscript tragedy, and Addison was suddenly urged to seize the opportunity. He did so, and it was presently produced on the stage. It enjoyed an amazing success, and it may be held that the evening of the 30th of April 1713 was the climax of Addison's existence. The tragedy enjoyed a run of then unprecedented length, and, being printed, was hailed all over Europe as a masterpiece of regularity and elegance. In the midst of this delirium of eulogy, the old critic, John Dennis, raised, almost alone, the protesting voice of common sense. From this point in his life the lucky star of Addison seems to have been gradually clouded, through no fault of his. The quarrel with Pope, which dates from 1715, although he took



Joseph Addison.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY MICHAEL DAHL.

it with dignity, must have caused him great annoyance, and he was but poorly served by the "little senate" of second-class writers which he collected around him at Button's, although the faithful friendship, amounting almost to adoration, which was displayed by Tickell cannot but have gratified Addison. But the latter began to age early, and already, no doubt, was apt to sit "attentive to his



Whereas there is already printed Four volumes of the Spectators which Include from Number one to number Three hundred Twenty one — And Whereas there is two Volumes more now printing which will take in from Number Three hundred Twenty one to to Number four hundred & Eighty or thereabouts Which will make the Volumes and Whereas it is intended by the Authors whose Names are hereinafter mentioned to Continue writing the said Spectator to the end of this present Month of November which will make a Seventh volume —

Now Know all Men by these presents that Joseph addison of St James Westminster Esq and Richard Steele of St Giles in the fields Esq for and in consideration of the Sume of five hundred Seventy and five pounds to them or one of them in hand paid by Samuel Buckley of London printer & Bookseller the Receipt whereof — they the said Joseph addison & Richard Steele doe hereby respectively acknowledge they the said Joseph addison and Richard Steele Have and each and either of them Doth Grant Bargaine Sell Assigne Transferr and Set over and by these presents they the said Joseph addison and Richard Steele Doe and each and either of them Doth grant Bargain Sell assign Transferr and Set over unto the said Samuel Buckley his Executors Administrators and Assigns All that their full and Sole right and Title of in and to one Moiety or full half Share of the Copys of all and every the above mentioned Seven volumes of Spectators which said — Moiety or full half share to remain unto the said Samuel Buckley his heires and Assigns for Ever In Witness whereof the said Joseph addison and Richard Steele have hereunto — Set their hands & Seals this Fourth day of November Annoq Domi 1712.

Witness Richard Wheatley
David Verdon
at the Fountain tavern in the Strand

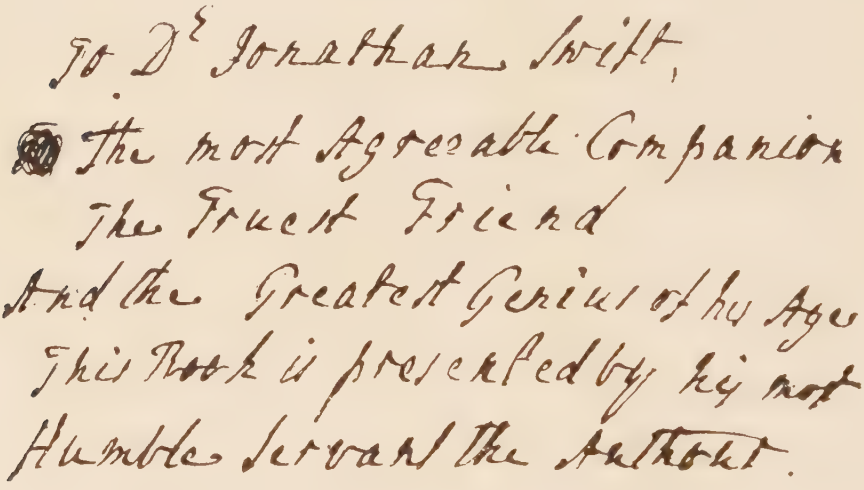
Joseph Addison

Richard Steele

Facsimile of the Assignment of the "Spectator," signed by Addison and Steele

own applause," and to offer those features of human weakness which the cruel penetration of Pope has preserved for posterity in the venomous portrait of Atticus. The energies of Addison were now distributed between politics, in which he represented the most moderate of the Whigs, and the composition of an apologetic work on the history of Christianity, which he left unfinished. At the death of Anne, Addison returned with the Whigs to office, and was Chief Secretary in Ireland for some months of 1714–15. When he resigned this post he began to

edit a newspaper in the interests of the Government, namely, the *Freeholder* (1715–16). This journal ceased when its work was done, and Addison was made a Commissioner for Trade. In the summer of 1716 he married the widowed Countess of Warwick, to whom he had been long attached, but there is more than a fear that Addison found "wedded discord with a noble wife." In 1717, when Sunderland became Prime Minister, he appointed Addison a Secretary of State, but the essayist was not conspicuously successful as a politician. In particular, during the ten years during which he sat for Malmesbury in the House of Commons he spoke but once, and then broke down in speaking: "he had too beautiful an imagination," one of his contemporaries said, "to make a man of business." In March 1718 Addison resigned his office, his health beginning to give him serious anxiety. It is painful to record that the last year of Addison's life was embittered by an acrimonious controversy with his old and close friend, Steele. Worn out with asthma and dropsy, Addison was now sinking, and on the


To Dr Jonathan Swift,
The most Agreeable Companion
The Truest Friend
And the Greatest Genius of his Age
This Book is presented by his most
Humble Servant the Author.

Autograph Inscription of Addison's to Jonathan Swift

17th of June 1719 he died at Holland House, having lately entered his forty-eighth year. He called his stepson, the Earl of Warwick, to his bedside, and bid him "see in what peace a Christian can die." Addison lay in state in Jerusalem Chamber, and then was buried "by midnight lamps" in Westminster Abbey, as Tickell has described in his beautiful and touching elegy. Addison's only child, an unmarried daughter, survived until 1797.

Will Wimble.

Will Wimble is younger brother to a baronet, and descended of the ancient family of the Wimbles. He is now between forty and fifty; but being bred to no business and born to no estate, he generally lives with his elder brother as superintendent of his game. He hunts a pack of dogs better than any man in the county, and is very famous for finding out a hare. He is extremely well versed in all the little handicrafts of an idle man. He makes a May-fly to a miracle; and furnishes the whole country with angle-rods. As he is a good-natured officious fellow, and very much esteemed on account of his family, he is a very welcome guest at every house, and keeps

up a good correspondence among all the gentlemen about him. He carries a tulip-root in his pocket from one to another, or exchanges a puppy between a couple of friends that live perhaps in the opposite sides of the county. Will is a particular favourite of all the young heirs, whom he frequently obliges with a net that he has weaved, or a setting-dog that he has made himself. He now and then presents a pair of garters of his own knitting to their mothers or sisters; and raises a great deal of mirth among them, by inquiring as often as he meets them "how they wear!" These gentleman-like manufactures and obliging little humours make Will the darling of the country.

Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, the Friend and Patron of Addison

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

Haunted.

At a little distance from Sir Roger's house, among the ruins of an old abbey, there is a long walk of aged elms, which are shot up so very high, that when one passes under them, the rooks and crows that rest upon the tops of them seem to be cawing in another region. I am very much delighted with this sort of noise, which I consider as a kind of natural prayer to that Being who supplies the wants of his whole creation, and who, in the beautiful language of the Psalms, feedeth the young ravens that call upon him. I like this retirement the better, because of an ill report it lies under of being haunted; for which reason (as I have been told in the family) no living creature ever walks in it besides the chaplain. My good friend the butler desired me with a very grave face not to venture myself in it after sunset, for that one of the footmen had been almost frighted out of his wits by a spirit that appeared to him in the shape of a black horse without an head: to which he added, that about a month ago one of the maids coming home late that way with a pail of milk upon her head, heard such a rustling among the bushes that she let it fall.

I was taking a walk in this place last night between the hours of nine and ten, and could not but fancy it one of the most proper scenes in the world for a ghost to appear in. The ruins of the abbey are scattered up and down on every side, and half covered with ivy and elder-bushes, the harbours of several solitary birds which seldom make their appearance till the dusk of the evening. The place was formerly a churchyard, and has still several marks in it of graves and burying-places. There is such an echo among the old ruins and vaults, that if you stamp but a little louder than ordinary, you hear the sound repeated. At the same time the walk of elms, with the croaking of the ravens which from time to time are heard from the tops of them, looks exceeding solemn and venerable. These objects naturally raise seriousness and attention; and

when night heightens the awfulness of the place, and pours out her supernumerary horrors upon everything in it, I do not at all wonder that weak minds fill it with spectres and apparitions.

The Head-Dress.

The ladies have been for some time in a kind of moulting season with regard to that part of their dress, having cast great quantities of riband, lace, and cambric, and in some measure reduced that part of the human figure to the beautiful globular form which is natural to it. We have for a great while expected what kind of ornament would be substituted in the place of those antiquated commodes. But our female projectors were all the last summer so taken up with the improvement of their petticoats, that they had not time to attend to anything else; but having at length sufficiently adorned their lower parts, they now begin to turn their thoughts upon the other extremity, as well remembering the old kitchen proverb, "that if you light the fire at both ends, the middle will shift for itself."

I am engaged in this speculation by a sight which I lately met with at the opera. As I was standing in the hinder part of a box, I took notice of a little cluster of women sitting together in the prettiest-coloured hoods that I ever saw. One of them was blue, another yellow, and another philomot; the fourth was of a pink colour, and the fifth of a pale green. I looked with as much pleasure upon this little party-coloured assembly as upon a bed of tulips, and did not know at first whether it might not be an embassy of Indian queens; but upon my going about into the pit, and taking them in front, I was immediately undeceived, and saw so much beauty in every face that I found them all to be English. Such eyes and lips, cheeks and foreheads, could be the growth of no other country. The complexion of their faces hindered me from observing any farther the colour of their hoods, though I could easily perceive, by that unspeakable satisfaction which appeared in their looks, that their own thoughts were wholly taken up on those pretty ornaments they wore upon their heads.

Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729)

Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729), although always reported as being younger than his most distinguished friend, was, it has lately been discovered, born in March 1672, whereas Addison was not born until May. Steele was born in Dublin, where his father practised as an attorney; the latter died when his son was five years old, and Steele has given an enchanting picture of the emotions which his father's death awakened. In 1685 the boy was sent to the Charterhouse, and passed in 1690 to Christ Church, Oxford, and in 1691 to Merton College. It is supposed that he left the University and became a trooper in the Duke of Ormond's Life Guards in 1694; in his military capacity he was present at Queen Mary's funeral, of which his earliest publication, *The Procession*, of 1695, is a versified memorial. Of Steele's movements

Sir Richard Steele's Cottage on Haverstock Hill

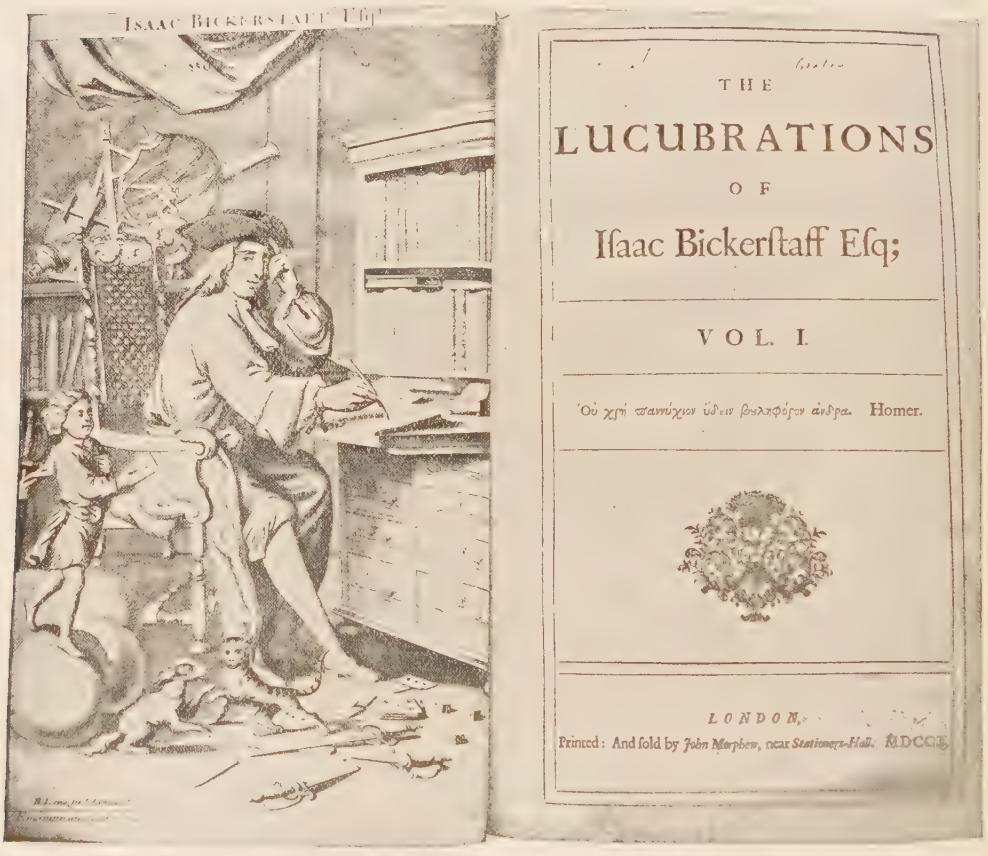
From an old Print

in the next six years we know very little, but during part of the time, at least, he served as a captain of Fusiliers. In 1701 Steele published his first important work, the *Christian Hero*, which was considered puritanical by his companions, and landed him in a duel, in which he ran his critic through the body. He now began to write for the stage, and his first comedy, *The Funeral*, dates from the close of 1701. His idea was to introduce morality to the stage, and make "virtue and vice appear just as they ought to do," and not as they are travestied in the art of Wycherley and Congreve. In the *Lying Lover* (1703) Steele was still more didactic, and it is not to be wondered at that his comedy was "damned for its piety." He tried a third time, with the *Tender Husband* (1705), a better play, but as complete a failure. He was by this time married to a lady, vaguely spoken of as "of vast possessions," who died in 1706. In May 1707 Steele received from Harley the important post of Gazetteer. Immediately after the death of his first wife, and perhaps at her funeral, Steele is believed to have made the acquaintance of Miss Mary Scurlock, a Welsh lady with "expectations." It was to her, before and after their marriage, that Steele addressed the extraordinary correspondence which, printed first in 1787, has done more than anything else to make us acquainted with his character. The marriage between Dick Steele and his "dear lovely Prue" took place in September 1707. His life with this handsome and fairly amiable lady was a chequered one. As Mr. Austin Dobson says, Steele was loyal, affectionate, and warm-hearted, but "hopelessly sanguine, restless, and impulsive." He took wine too freely: he squandered money far beyond his means; and these faults greatly strained Mrs. Steele's patience; but though they fought, they never parted, and to the last she was his "absolute governess," and "adored capricious beauty." The great wits of the age of Anne were now coming closer and closer; in 1708 Swift speaks of the "triumvirate of Addison, Steele and me," and when they met, Congreve and Pope were often of the party. Early in 1709 Steele borrowed the name of "Isaac Bickerstaff" from Swift to use as a pseudonym in the *Tatler*, which he began to publish on the 12th of April; this was a *Letter of Intelligence* destined to "gratify

Sir Richard Steele

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, at Hampton Court

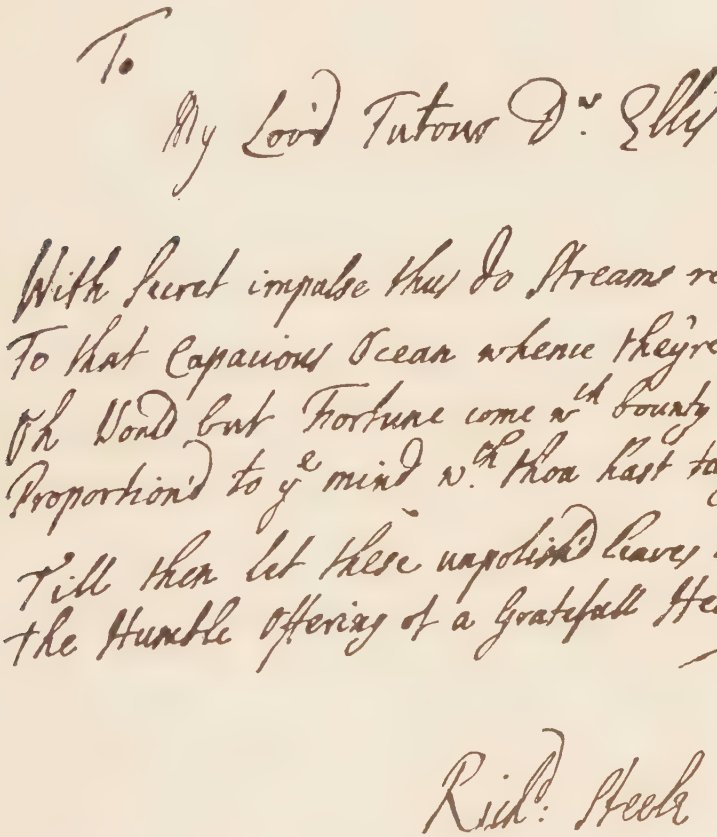
the curiosity of persons of all conditions, and each sex." At first Steele wrote it all himself, but soon he called in Addison to help. It ceased in January 1711, and was succeeded within two months by the *Spectator*, another folio sheet, consisting only of a single essay, whereas the *Tatler* had given a variety of news. The *Spectator*, too, came out on every week-day. The plan of this famous literary journal was, as we have it upon the evidence of Tickell, projected by Steele and Addison in concert, but it was the latter who represented the central figure of the Spectator Club, the celebrated Sir Roger de Coverley. When the paper ceased,



Facsimile Title and Frontispiece of First Collected Edition of the "Tatler"

it was found that Addison had contributed a somewhat larger number of essays than Steele, very few being from the pen of Eustace Budgell, Pope, and one or two others. The sale was enormous for those days,—it is estimated at 10,000 copies. In December 1712 this "noble entertainment for persons of a refined taste," as Berkeley called it, came abruptly to an end. Early in the career of the *Spectator* Swift had quarrelled with Addison, but he remained some time longer on terms of amity with Steele. The latter was now deep in debt, but the death of his mother-in-law, in 1713, brought him considerable accession of wealth. He was foolish enough to take a costly house in Bloomsbury Square, and to launch out into

every form of extravagance. In March he started a new daily paper, the *Guardian*, in which Addison originally took no part, but was soon drawn in. Steele and Swift were presently involved in acute hostility, and for political reasons the former resigned his offices; he left the *Guardian* almost entirely to Addison and Budgell, and entered the House of Commons as M.P. for Stockbridge. His purely literary work now took mainly the character of pamphlets, and for what he wrote about the fall of Dunkirk he was, in March 1714, expelled from the House. Steele, who had given up £400 a year to enter Parliament, was now in a deplorable


To
My Lord Tutour Dr Ellis

With Secret impulse thus do Streams return
To that Capacious Ocean whence they're born:
Oh Would but Fortune come wth bounty fraught
Proportion'd to ye mind wch thou hast taught!
Till then let these unpolish'd Leaves impart
The Humble offering of a Gratefull Heart

Richd: Steele

Autograph Verse from Steele to Dr. Ellis

plight. He continued the active publication of newspapers and pamphlets, and the death of Queen Anne restored him to success. He went on writing dull political tracts, and Swift in cruel justice said that Steele had "obliged his party with a very awkward pamphleteer in the room of an excellent droll." In 1715 he was knighted, and became Supervisor (or Manager) of Drury Lane Theatre, at a salary of £700 a year. Early in the same year he was elected M.P. for Boroughbridge. In the following years we find him frequently visiting Scotland, upon public business; and in 1717 Lady Steele was principally living in Wales, to look after an estate they had at Carmarthen: to this circumstance we owe a large number of her husband's delightful letters to her. She died late in 1718, and

after that event Steele had little luck. In 1719 he quarrelled with Addison, and in 1722 he was again in Parliament, as M.P. for Wendover. In this year, moreover, he brought out his comedy of the *Conscious Lovers* with success, but presently fell into a condition of bankruptcy. He went to live at Hereford, and later at Carmarthen, where he was afflicted with a stroke of paralysis. "He retained his cheerful sweetness of temper to the last," but was a hopelessly broken man, to whom death came as a release on the 1st of September 1729. The startling inconsistencies of Steele's character and his restless incoherency have led to very diverse judgments as to his character, but he seems to have been a weak man who yet loved honesty and virtue with all his heart. He was what was called "a black man," with a dark complexion, very bright eyes, and deep brown hair.

Sir Richard Steele

After the Portrait by Jonathan Richardson

Politeness.

I do not doubt but England is at present as polite a nation as any in the world; but any man who thinks can easily see, that the affectation of being gay and in fashion has very near eaten up our good sense and our religion. Is there anything so just as that mode and gallantry should be built upon exerting ourselves in what is proper and agreeable to the institutions of justice and piety among us? And yet is there anything more common, than that we run in perfect contradiction to them? All which is supported by no other pretension, than that it is done with what we call a good grace.

Nothing ought to be held laudable or becoming, but what nature itself should prompt us to think so. Respect to all kinds of superiors is founded, methinks, upon instinct; and yet what is so ridiculous as age! I make this abrupt transition to the mention of this vice more than any other, in order to introduce a little story, which I think a pretty instance, that the most polite age is in danger of being the most vicious.

It happened at Athens, during a public representation of some play exhibited in honour of the commonwealth, that an old gentleman came too late for a place suitable to his age and quality. Many of the young gentlemen who observed the difficulty and confusion he was in, made signs to him that they would accommodate him if he came where they sat. The good man bustled through the crowd accordingly; but when he came to the seats to which he was invited, the jest was to sit close and expose him, as he stood, out of countenance, to the whole audience. The frolic went round all the Athenian benches. But on those occasions there were also particular places assigned for foreigners. When the good man skulked towards the boxes appointed for the Lacedemonians, that honest people, more virtuous than polite,

rose up all to a man, and with the greatest respect received him among them. The Athenians being suddenly touched with the sense of the Spartan virtue and their own degeneracy, gave a thunder of applause; and the old man cried out,—The Athenians understand what is good, but the Lacedemonians practise it.

IMPUDENCE.

I take an impudent fellow to be a sort of outlaw in good breeding, and therefore what is said of him no nation or person can be concerned for. For this reason, one may be free upon him. I have put myself to great pains in considering this prevailing quality which we call impudence, and have taken notice that it exerts itself in a different manner, according to the different soils wherein such subjects of these dominions, as are masters of it, were born. Impudence in an Englishman is sullen and insolent; in a Scotchman, it is untractable and rapacious; in an Irishman, absurd and fawning. As the course of the world now runs, the impudent Englishman behaves like a surly landlord, the Scot like an ill-received guest, and the Irishman like a stranger, who knows he is not welcome. There is seldom anything entertaining either in the impudence of a South or North Briton; but that of an Irishman is always comic. A true and genuine impudence is ever the effect of ignorance without the least sense of it. The best and most successful Starers now in this town are of that nation; they have usually the advantage of the stature mentioned in the above letter of my correspondent, and generally take their stands in the eye of women of fortune; insomuch that I have known one of them, three months after he came from plough, with a tolerable good air lead out a woman from a play, which one of our own breed, after four years at Oxford and two at the Temple, would have been afraid to look at.

We have hitherto said nothing of JONATHAN SWIFT, yet he flows right across the present field of our vision, from William III. to George II. His course is that of a fiery comet that dashes through the constellation of the wits of Anne, and falls in melancholy ashes long after the occultation of the last of them. The friend and companion of them for a season, he pursues his flaming course with little real relation to their milder orbits, and is one of the most singular and most original figures that our history has produced. Swift was a bundle of paradoxes—a great churchman who has left not a trace on our ecclesiastical system, an ardent politician who was never more than a fly on the wheel. He is immortal on the one side on which he believed his genius ephemeral; he survives solely, but splendidly, as a man of letters. His career was a failure: he began life as a gentleman's dependant, he quitted it "like a poisoned rat in a hole"; with matchless energy and ambition, he won neither place nor power: and in the brief heyday of his influence with the Ministry, he who helped others was impotent to endow himself. Swift is the typical instance of the powerlessness of pure intellect to secure any but intellectual triumphs. But even the victories of his brain were tainted; his genius left a taste of brass on his own palate. That Swift was ever happy, that his self-torturing nature was capable of contentment, is not certain; that for a long period of years he was wretched beyond the lot of man is evident, and those have not sounded the depths of human misery who have not followed in their mysterious obscurity the movements of the character of Swift.

His will was too despotic to yield to his misfortunes; his pride sustained him, and in middle life a fund of restless animal spirits. We know but little of his early years, yet enough to see that the *splendida bilis*, the *sæva indignatio*, which ill-health exacerbated, were his companions from the first. We cannot begin to comprehend his literary work without recognising this. His weapon was ink, and he loved to remember that gall and copperas went to the making of it. It was in that deadest period, at the very close of the seventeenth century, that his prodigious talent first made itself apparent. With no apprenticeship in style, no relation of discipleship to any previous French[1] or English writer, but steeped in the Latin classics, he produced, at the age of thirty, two of the most extraordinary masterpieces of humour and satire which were ever written, the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books*. It was not until five or six years later that he gave them together, anonymously, to the press. In the *Tale of a Tub* every characteristic of Swift's style is revealed—the mordant wit, the vehement graceful ease, the stringent simplicity. To the end of his days he never wrote better things than the description of the goddess of Criticism drawn by geese in a chariot, the dedication to Prince Prosperity with its splendid hilarity and irony, the doubly distilled allegorical apologue of the Spider and the Bee. In his poisonous attacks on the deists, in his gleams of sulky misanthropy, in the strange filthiness of his fancy, in the stranger exhilaration which seizes him whenever the idea of

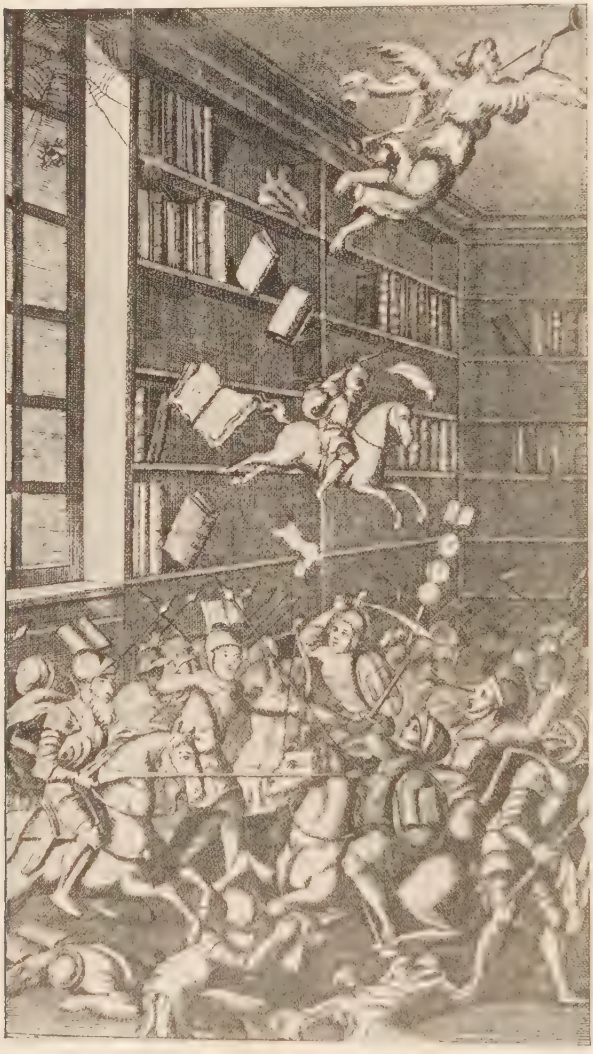


Illustration from the "Battle of the Books"
From the 1769 Edition of Swift's Works

[1] He may, it is true, have seen the *Combat des Livres* of Callières.

madness is introduced—in all these things Swift reveals his essential character in this his first and perhaps greatest book. Although every one admired it, the *Tale of a Tub* was doubtless fatal to his ambition, thus wrecked at the outset on the reef of his ungovernable satire. The book, to be plain, is a long gibe at theology, and it is not surprising that no bishopric could ever be given to the inventor of the Brown Loaf and the Universal Pickle. He might explain away his mockery, declare it to have been employed in the Anglican cause, emphasise the denial that his aim was irreligious; the damning evidence remained that when he had had the sacred garments in his hands he had torn away, like an infuriated ape, as much of the gold fringe as he could. The fact was that, without any design of impiety, he knew not how to be devout. He always, by instinct, saw the hollowness and the seamy side. His enthusiasms were negative, and his burning imagination, even when he applied it to religion, revealed not heaven but hell to him.

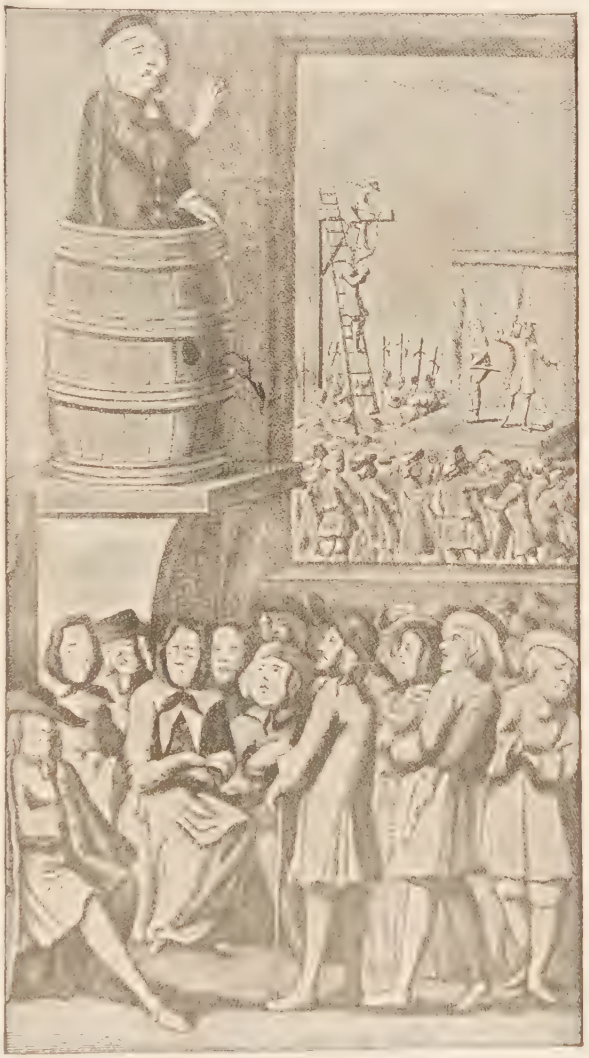


Illustration from the "Tale of a Tub

The power and vitality of such a nature could not be concealed; they drew every sincere intellect towards him. Already, in 1705, Addison was hailing Swift as "the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of the age." We take him up again in 1711, when the slender volume of *Miscellanies* reminds us of what he had been as a writer from the age of thirty-five to forty-five. The contents of this strange book name for us the three caustic religious treatises, the first of Swift's powerful political tracts (the *Sacramental Test*), various other

waifs and rags from his culminating year, 1708, gibes and flouts of many kinds revealing the spirit of "a very positive young man," trifles in verse and prose to amuse his friends the Whig Ministers or the ladies of Lord Berkeley's family. Nothing could be more occasional than all this; nothing, at first sight, less imbued with intensity or serious feeling. Swift's very compliments are impertinent, his arguments in favour of Christianity subversive. But under all this there is the passion of an isolated intellect, and he was giving it play in the frivolities of a compromising humour.

The published writings of Swift during the first forty-four years of his life were comprised in two volumes of very moderate dimensions. But if the purely literary outcome of all this period had been exiguous, it was now to grow scantier still. At the very moment when the group of Anne wits, led by Pope and Addison, were entering with animation upon their best work, Swift, almost ostentatiously, withdrew to the sphere of affairs, and for ten years refrained entirely from all but political authorship. His unexampled *Journal to Stella*, it is true, belongs to this time of obscuration, but it is hardly literature, though of the most intense and pathetic interest. Swift now stood "ten times better" with the new Tories than ever he did with the old Whigs, and his pungent pen poured forth lampoons and satirical projects. The influence of Swift's work of this period upon the style of successive English publicists is extremely curious; he began a new order of political warfare, demanding lighter arms and swifter manœuvres than the seventeenth century had dreamed of. Even Halifax seems cold and slow beside the lightning changes of mood, the inexorable high spirits of Swift. That such a tract as the *Sentiments of a Church of England Man*, with its gusts of irony, its white heat of preposterous moderation, led on towards Junius is obvious; but Swift is really the creator of the whole school of eighteenth-century rhetorical diatribe on its better side, wherever it is not leaden and conventional. It may be said that he invented a vital polemical system, which was used through the remainder of the century by every one who dealt in that kind of literature, and who was at the same time strong enough to wield such thunderbolts.

That no one, until the time of Burke, who had other ammunition of his own, could throw these bolts about with anything of Swift's fierce momentum, it is scarcely necessary to say. His velocity as an antagonist was extraordinary. He was troubled by no doubt of his own opinion, nor by any mercy for that of his enemy. He was the first Englishman to realise, in the very nest of optimism, that the public institutions of a society could be, and probably were, corrupt. In the generation of Shaftesbury this discovery was really a momentous one. Mandeville made it soon after, but to his squalid moral nature the shock was not so great as it was to Swift's. That most things were evil and odious in the best of all possible worlds was a revelation to Swift that exhilarated him almost to ecstasy. He could hardly believe it to be true, and

trembled lest he should be forced to admit that, after all, Pope and Shaftesbury were sound in their optimism. But his satire probed the insufficiency of mankind in place after place, and there gradually rose in Swift, like an intoxication, a certainty of the vileness of the race. When he was quite convinced, madness was close upon him, but in the interval he wrote that sinister and incomparable masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels*, in which misanthropy reaches the pitch of a cardinal virtue, and the despicable race of man is grossly and finally humiliated.

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) was born at 7 Hoey's Court, Dublin, on the 30th of November 1667. He was the posthumous son of Jonathan Swift, younger son of Thomas Swift, vicar of Goodrich, near Ross, in Herefordshire, who had been, from January 1666 to April 1667, Steward of the King's Inns in Dublin; his mother had been Abigail Erick of Leicester; the family of the Swifts came from Yorkshire. As Swift was always anxious to insist, he was an Englishman except for the accident which made him born an Irishman. "I was a year old before I left Ireland, and to my sorrow did not die before I came back to it." To claim him as a Milesian, therefore, requires courage. Swift's return to England was abrupt; he was kidnapped over to Whitehaven by a nurse who could not bear to part with him. Mrs. Swift does not seem to have been anxious about him, and he was perhaps at Whitehaven until, about 1671, she came over to her native town of Leicester. In 1673, at the age of six, Swift was sent to Kilkenny School, called the Eton of Ireland, where, in process of time, Congreve became his school-fellow. He stayed at Kilkenny until in April 1682 he was entered at Trinity College, Dublin. But, so he tells us, "by the ill-treatment of his nearest relations, he was so discouraged and sunk in his spirits that he too much neglected his academic studies." In 1686 he was given a degree, but, "in a manner little to his credit," *speciali gratia*. He continued on at Trinity College, but was guilty of repeated irregularities and cynical recklessness of conduct; on his twenty-first birthday he was severely punished and suspended from his degrees. But this marked the close of his academic career; in company with hosts of others, he fled to England after the Revolution of 1688, where his mother received him at Leicester. He was presently offered a situation in the family of Sir William Temple, who was a connection on the father's as well as on the

Jonathan Swift

From George Vertue's Engraving

mother's side. Temple was now retired from diplomacy to his house, Moor Park, Farnham; he does not seem to have discovered that his amanuensis was a man of genius. In May 1694 Swift left Temple in a fit of sudden anger, passed over into Ireland, and in October was ordained deacon; he took priest's orders in the following January. His quarrel with his kinsman and patron was, however, healed, and after an absence of exactly two years Swift returned to Moor Park. This was the approximate date of the first of Swift's mysterious relations with women; he left behind him in Ireland a "Varina" (Miss Waring), with whom he was in passionate correspondence. It is believed that Swift's second period of residence at Moor Park was happier than the first, and that Temple learned to value his strange inmate. Those who have condemned Sir

View of Trinity College, Dublin

From an old Engraving

William have perhaps forgotten how much there was in his agreeable and cultivated conversation which must have been far more attractive to Swift than what most country houses at that day could afford him. We find the latter already an invalid, but trying to combat ill-health by violent daily exercise. He was isolated; "I am often," he says, "two or three months without seeing anybody besides the family," but one member of this was Esther Johnson, the celebrated "Stella." Early in 1699 Temple died, and Swift sincerely mourned his loss. Meanwhile, in the retirement and obscurity of Moor Park, Swift had composed some astonishing things—the *Tale of a Tub* in 1696, the *Battle of the Books* in 1697; his stiff attempts at the Pindaric Ode were earlier. He had been reading history and the classics with extreme eagerness and fulness. He was now in his thirty-second year, with a small inheritance from Temple, but with no

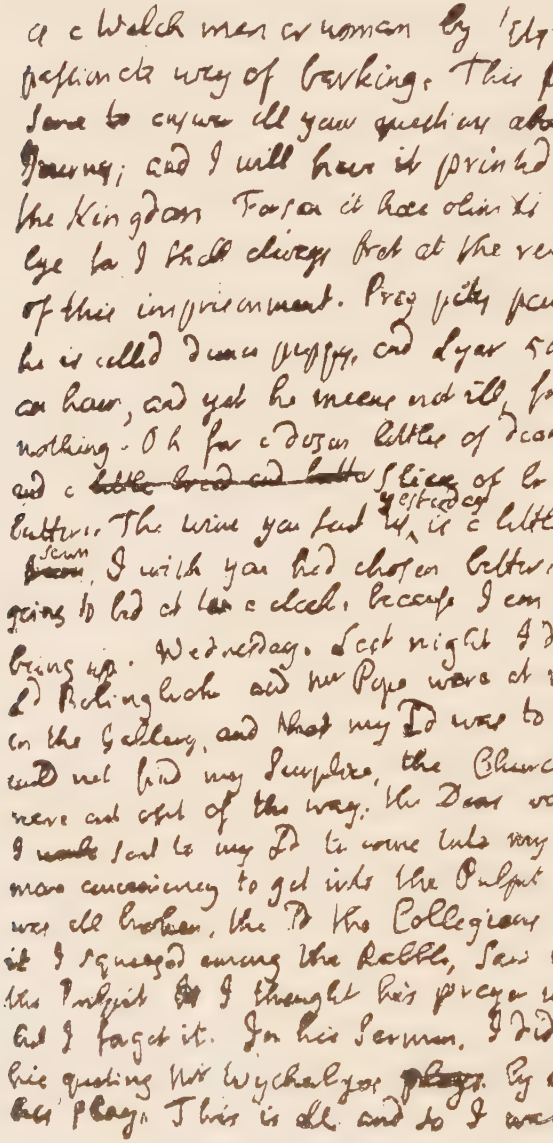
Jonathan Swift.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY JERVAS.

apparent means of income. After some disappointment, he accepted the post of chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley, who was just going over to Ireland; he was under-secretary also, but immediately on reaching Dublin he found himself dismissed from this post, and he resigned the chaplaincy as well. Early in 1700 he was given a group of livings and a prebend, the total revenues of all of which were sufficient for a single man to live upon in Ireland. He now finally broke off all relations with Varina, and came into closer connection with Stella, who had arrived at Dublin "with full resolution to engage him." Swift's duties now called him chiefly to his living of Laracor, in Meath, where he improved the house and garden, and even kept a curate, although the congregation was so small that it was here, having no audience but the clerk, that he opened the service with "Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me." Five visits to London, covering in all some three years, broke up the monotony of Swift's Irish residence from 1700 to 1710. In 1704 he published, in a single anonymous volume, the *Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books*, and some brief kindred treatises; and this introduced him to the London wits, of whom he was already intimately known to Congreve. His friendship with Addison and Steele dates from 1705, and under this stimulus he wrote *Baucis and Philemon* and the facetious Partridge tracts (1708). He saw his friends advance in the world, however, while he himself remained what he scornfully called a "hedge-parson." Already, since 1701, Swift had dabbled in politics, and had privately published, in the Whig interest, his brilliant *Discourse on the Dissensions in Athens and Rome*. After 1704 he found himself too high a churchman to applaud Whig measures without reserve. It was probably the uncertain note which he sounded in such tracts as the *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, which stood in the way of his promotion; years passed and Swift got nothing, although in 1708 the bishopric of Waterford seemed within his reach. In 1709, after the failure of his negotiations to secure Queen Anne's Bounty for the Irish Church, Swift abandoned the Whigs altogether, and returned to Laracor to sulk. He stayed a year and a half "in one scurvy acre of ground," until the Whigs were turned out of office in August 1710. Swift hastened to London as soon as the news reached him, and he received civil attentions from the leaders of both parties. He was presented, "as a discontented person, who was ill-used for not being Whig enough," to the Tory leader, Harley, and was welcomed with flattering effusion. The *Journal to Stella* now begins, and for thirty months keeps us closely informed as to Swift's movements. Swift found himself "ten times better with the new people than he ever was with the old, and forty times more caressed." He began to write with vehement and effective wit in the Tory *Examiner*. His tract on the *Conduct of the Allies* may plausibly be conceived as having brought about the fall of Marlborough, and early in 1712 Swift was at the height of his political and personal prestige.

Esther Johnson ("Stella")

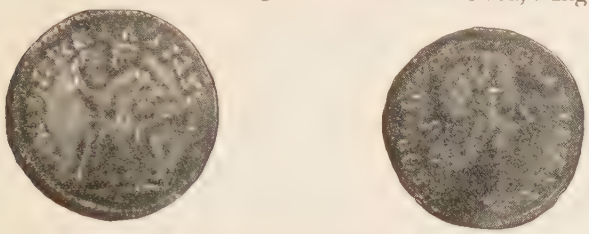
He used it with generous pertinacity for the advantage of his personal friends, and especially of men of letters; for himself he could do nothing. At last, in April 1713, Swift was appointed to be Dean of St. Patrick's; he saw he should get nothing better, and three months later, in great depression of spirits, he left for Dublin. The Tories wanted his pen, and presently called him back, but when in May 1714 he saw the quarrel between Harley (now Lord Oxford) and St. John (now Lord Bolingbroke) to be hopeless, he withdrew to a rectory in Berkshire, and wrote his brilliant pamphlet, *Free Thoughts upon the Present State of Affairs*. But when Oxford fell in July, Swift refused to join Bolingbroke, nor was there much opportunity for doing so, since Queen Anne died and the Tories were "not so much ruined as annihilated." Swift, "like a man knocked down," hastened to Dublin. Here, for some years, he lived an extremely quiet life; "my amusements," he says, "are defending my small dominions against the archbishop, and endeavouring to reduce my rebellious choir."



Facsimile Page from Swift's Private Diary

He had pushed now to intimacy an acquaintance with Miss Hester Vanhomrigh, "Vanessa," whom he had slightly known since 1708; the longest of Swift's poems, the *Cadenus* [*Decanus*] *and Vanessa*, probably written in 1714, tells the story of this unfortunate relationship. But on reaching Dublin, the influence of Stella

immediately began to supplant that of Vanessa, although the latter followed Swift to Ireland. But he began a strange, indeed a perfectly inexplicable, double subterranean life between these two unhappy women. There was a legend, unconfirmed but undenied, that in 1716 he secretly married Stella; in 1723 Vanessa wrote to Stella to ask if this was true, and Swift, possessing himself of the letter, rode at once to Celbridge, where Vanessa lived, flung the letter on the table without a word, and rode away. Very shortly afterwards Vanessa, who never recovered from the shock, died. Stella lived on until January 1728. In an envelope Swift preserved a lock of her hair, writing outside "Only a woman's hair." All this business about Varina, Stella, and Vanessa is wholly mysterious; we know no more than what Archbishop King is said to have told Delany, that Swift "was the most unhappy man on earth, but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question." As early as 1717 he said to Young, "I shall die at the top," and he seems to have been always haunted by the fear of dying insane. To return to his public life, Swift was for six years silent both as an author and as a politician. In 1720 he published his earliest Irish pamphlet, an appeal to the people to consume none but Irish manufactures. This tract made a stir, but a far greater commotion was caused in 1724 by the publication of *The Drapier's Letters*, appealing with sarcastic vehemence against the proposed copper coinage of William Wood, a bankrupt hardwaresman; these are the most brilliant of Swift's polemical writings. Walpole sent Carteret over to Dublin to make a compromise and to punish the anonymous Drapier. Swift went to Carteret's levée, and mocked him for persecuting a poor tradesman; his own pseudonymity was preserved, Carteret failed, and the coinage of Wood was presented by the Grand Jury as a nuisance. This was the most brilliantly successful of Swift's political actions. He became the idol of Ireland, and when Walpole proposed to arrest him, he was told that a guard of 10,000 men would be needful to get him safe out of the country. Swift was now already sketching the most famous of his books, but it was not until late in 1726 that *Gulliver's Travels* was ready for the press; it was published under the pseudonym of Captain Lemuel Gulliver, and as if edited by "Richard Sympson," Lemuel's cousin. After the death of Stella, Swift's cynicism became more pronounced. To 1729 belongs *The Modest Proposal*, that the children of poor people in Ireland should be prevented from being a burden to their parents or country by being served up as food. In 1731 he wrote his amazing poem *On the Death of Dr. Swift.* In these and similar writings, in prose and verse, we see "the corruptions and villanies of men" eating into Swift's flesh and exhausting his spirit. He breathed in a dry furnace of irony and anger. In 1726 and 1727 he paid two short



Wood's Ha'pence

View of St. Patrick's Cathedral

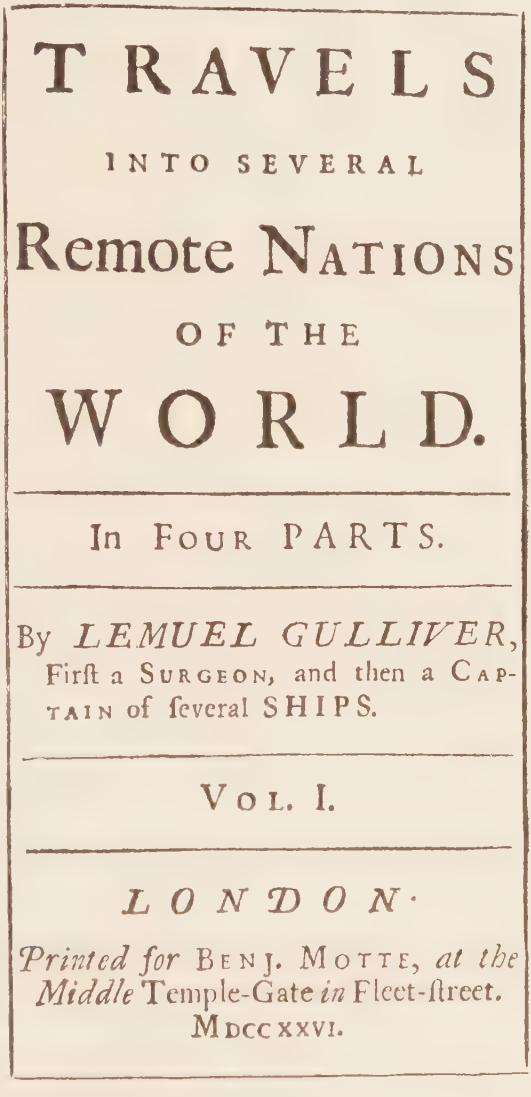
visits to England, and saw Pope for the last time. In 1728, after Stella died, he went to Market Hill, and was the guest of Sir Arthur Acheson for nearly a year, glad to escape from that "wretched, dirty dog-hole and prison," as he called Dublin. The finest of his poems, *On Poetry, a Rhapsody*, belongs to 1733, and many of the sardonic bagatelles of these late years of his life have been preserved. He was extremely unhappy, and attempted more and more to escape by sheer nonsense from the bondage of his intolerable depression of spirits. The latest of his important works show, in astonishing combination, an inanity of theme with unflagging splendour of wit and intellectual movement; these are *The Polite Conversation* and *Directions for Servants*, strangest monuments of a genius already in decay. These appear to have been finished in 1738, and after this he grew to be but the shadow of himself. His intellect steadily declined, and after 1740 was almost wholly eclipsed. He suffered from deep dejection, and occasionally from violent insanity, but "as a rule he enjoyed the painlessness of torpor." He died, after a long succession of convulsions, on the 19th of October 1745, and was buried in St. Patrick's, where an epitaph still tells us that his grave is a place where cruel indignation has no longer power to lacerate the heart. His character, person, and writings have ever since been the objects of a curiosity which shows no signs of being either satisfied or exhausted.

Engraved Frontispiece to "Gulliver's Travels"

FROM "A TALE OF A TUB."

I am now trying an experiment very frequent among modern authors, which is to write upon nothing; when the subject is utterly exhausted, to let the pen still move on: by some called the ghost of wit, delighting to walk after the death of its body. And to say the truth, there seems to be no part of knowledge in fewer hands than that of discerning when to have done. By the time that an author has written out a book he and his readers are become old acquaintance, and grow very loth to part; so that I have sometimes known it to be in writing as in visiting, where the ceremony of taking

leave has employed more time than the whole conversation before. The conclusion of a treatise resembles the conclusion of human life, which has sometimes been compared to the end of a feast, where few are satisfied to depart, *ut plenus vitæ conviva;* for men will sit down after the fullest meal, though it be only to doze or to sleep out the rest of the day. But in this latter I differ extremely from other writers; and shall be too proud if, by all my labours, I can have anyways contributed to the repose of mankind in times so turbulent and unquiet as these. Neither do I think such an employment so very alien from the office of a wit as some would suppose. For among a very polite nation in Greece, there were the same temples built and consecrated to Sleep and the Muses; between which two deities they believed the strictest friendship was established.

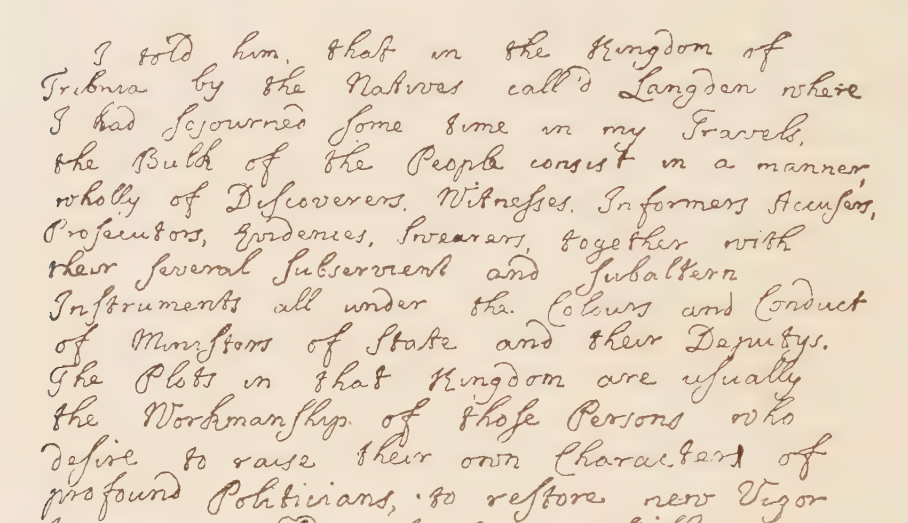

TRAVELS
INTO SEVERAL
Remote NATIONS
OF THE
WORLD.
In FOUR PARTS.
By *LEMUEL GULLIVER*,
First a SURGEON, and then a CAPTAIN of several SHIPS.
VOL. I.
LONDON:
Printed for BENJ. MOTTE, *at the Middle* Temple-Gate *in* Fleet-ſtreet.
MDCCXXVI.

Title-page of First Edition of "Gulliver's Travels"

FROM "THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS."

I am glad, answered the bee, to hear you grant at least that I am come honestly by my wings and my voice; for then, it seems, I am obliged to Heaven alone for my flights and my music; and Providence would never have bestowed on me two such gifts, without designing them for the noblest ends. I visit indeed all the flowers and blossoms of the field and garden; but whatever I collect thence enriches myself, without the least injury to their beauty, their smell, or their taste. Now, for you and your skill in architecture and other mathematics, I have little to say: in that building of yours there might, for aught I know, have been labour and method enough; but, by woeful experience for us both, it is too plain the materials are naught; and I hope you will henceforth take warning, and consider duration and matter, as well as method and art. You boast indeed of being obliged to no other creature, but of drawing and spinning out all from yourself; that is to say, if we may judge of the liquor in the vessel by what issues out, you possess a good plentiful store of dirt and poison in your breast; and, though I would by no means lessen or disparage your genuine stock of either, yet I doubt you are somewhat obliged, for an increase of both, to a little foreign assistance. Your inherent portion of dirt does not fail of acquisitions, by sweepings exhaled from below; and one insect furnishes you with a share of poison to destroy another. So that, in short, the question comes all to this; whether is the nobler being

of the two, that which, by a lazy contemplation of four inches round, by an overweening pride, feeding and engendering on itself, turns all into excrement and venom, pro-



A Page of the MS. of "Gulliver's Travels"

ducing nothing at all but flybane and a cobweb; or that which, by a universal range, with long search, much study, true judgment, and distinction of things, brings home honey and wax.

Essay on a Broomstick.

This single stick, which you now behold ingloriously lying in that neglected corner, I once knew in a flourishing state in a forest: it was full of sap, full of leaves, and full of boughs; but now, in vain does the busy art of man pretend to vie with nature, by tying that withered bundle of twigs to its sapless trunk: it is now, at best, but the reverse of what it was, a tree turned upside down, the branches on the earth, and the root in the air; it is now handled by every dirty wench, condemned to do her drudgery, and, by a capricious kind of fate, destined to make other things clean, and be nasty itself: at length, worn to the stumps in the service of the maids, it is either thrown out of doors, or condemned to the last use, of kindling a fire. When I beheld this I sighed, and said within myself, *Surely man is a broomstick!* Nature sent him into the world strong and lusty, in a thriving condition, wearing his own hair on his head, the proper branches of this reasoning vegetable, until the axe of intemperance has lopped off his green boughs, and left him a withered trunk: he then flies to art, and puts on a periwig, valuing himself upon an unnatural bundle of hairs (all covered with powder), that never grew on his head; but now, should this our broomstick pretend to enter the scene, proud of those birchen spoils it never bore, and all covered with dust, though the sweepings of the finest lady's chamber, we should be apt to ridicule and despise its vanity. Partial judges that we are of our own excellences and other men's defaults!

But a broomstick, perhaps you will say, is an emblem of a tree standing on its head; and pray what is man, but a topsy-turvy creature, his animal faculties perpetually mounted on his rational, his head where his heels should be, grovelling on the earth! and yet, with all his faults, he sets up to be a universal reformer and corrector of abuses, a remover of grievances, rakes into every slut's corner of nature, bringing hidden corruption to the light, and raises a mighty dust where there was none before; sharing deeply all the while in the very same pollutions he pretends to sweep away; his last days are spent in slavery to women, and generally the least deserving; till, worn out to the stumps, like his brother besom, he is either kicked out of doors, or made use of to kindle flames for others to warm themselves by.

Conversation.

Raillery is the finest part of conversation; but, as it is our usual custom to counterfeit and adulterate whatever is too dear for us, so we have done with this, and turned it all into what is generally called repartee, or being smart, just as when an expensive fashion comes up, those who are not able to reach it content themselves with some paltry imitation. It now passes for raillery to run a man down in discourse, to put him out of countenance, and make him ridiculous; sometimes to expose the defects of his person or understanding; on all which occasions, he is obliged not to be angry, to avoid the imputation of not being able to take a jest. It is admirable to observe one who is dexterous at this art, singling out a weak adversary, getting the laugh on his side, and then carrying all before him. The French, from whence we borrow the word, have a quite different idea of the thing, and so had we in the politer age of our fathers. Raillery was to say something that at first appeared a reproach or reflection, but, by some turn of wit, unexpected and surprising, ended always in a compliment, and to the advantage of the person it was addressed to. And surely one of the best rules in conversation is, never to say a thing which any of the company can reasonably wish we had rather left unsaid: nor can there anything be well more contrary to the ends for which people meet together, than to part unsatisfied with each other or themselves.

Swift declared that if the world had contained a dozen Arbuthnots *Gulliver's Travels* should have been burned. The charming physician was not only one of the very few persons whom Swift respected, but of his own generation the first to come completely under his literary influence.

If we take the lash out of the style of Swift, we have that of JOHN ARBUTHNOT, who can often hardly be distinguished from his friend and master. Without personal ambition of any kind, no vanity deterred Arbuthnot from frankly adopting, as closely as he could, the manner of the man whom he admired the most. As he was a perfectly sane and normal person, with plenty of wit and accomplishment, and without a touch of misanthropy, Arbuthnot served to popularise and to bring into general circulation the peculiar characteristics of Swift, and to reconcile him with his contemporaries.

John Arbuthnot (1667–1735)

John Arbuthnot (1667–1735) was born in April 1667, at Arbuthnot, in Kincardineshire; his father was a clergyman of the Episcopal Church. He was educated at Aberdeen, probably in Marischal College. At the Revolution, his father lost his preferment, and the family was broken up. Arbuthnot took his degree of bachelor of physic at St. Andrews, and came in 1691 to London. There he is said to have lodged with a woollen-draper, and to have taught mathematics for a living. In the autumn of 1694 he went, as a fellow-commoner, to University College, Oxford, where he stayed two years, but took his degree of M.D. in 1696, at St. Andrews. At Oxford he acted as private tutor to Edward Jeffreys, eldest son of Jeffrey Jeffreys, afterwards Sir Jeffrey; without some support of this kind he would have been too poor to go to Oxford. All Arbuthnot's early publications were on mathematical subjects, and he seems to have been but very slowly successful as a physician. He was so fortunate, however, as to be suddenly called in to attend Prince George of Denmark in a serious illness, and to treat him successfully. In consequence, Arbuthnot was, in October 1705, appointed Physician Extraordinary to Queen Anne, and he now rose steadily in emoluments and scientific reputation. About 1710 he began to move in the little circle of wits which moved around Pope, Gay, and Swift, and something in Arbuthnot's temper and character particularly recommended him to the last-mentioned. Hitherto Arbuthnot had been looked somewhat askance upon by the leaders of his own profession, but having in 1709 been made Physician in Ordinary to the Queen, he

John Arbuthnot
After the Portrait by Charles Jervas

was elected Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1710. It was in 1712 that, urged by Swift, Arbuthnot published the two anonymous tracts on which his fame as a satirical writer is mainly founded, *Law is a Bottomless Pit*, and *John Bull in his Senses*. These, with other treatises of the same year, were reprinted together as *The History of John Bull*, long attributed to Swift. Arbuthnot never admitted that the authorship was his, and we should still be in doubt, had not Swift happened to make an explicit statement on the subject when writing to Stella. To 1712 also belongs the *Pseudologia Politike*, or Art of Political Lying. Arbuthnot was one of the original members of the Scriblerus Club, and he was busily engaged on the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* when Queen Anne died. This event was a severe blow to Arbuthnot, and he went to Paris, in the hope, it would appear, of becoming physician to the young French king. In this he was disappointed, and reappeared in London, where he took a house in Dover Street, St. James's, and devoted himself to private practice. In 1717 he joined Pope and Gay in writing the comedy of *Three Hours after Marriage*. He went to France again in 1718. In 1727 he was appointed Harveian Orator. Arbuthnot suffered from chronic asthma, which gave him more and more persistent discomfort, and towards the end of his life he gave particular attention to the causes and the mitigation of this disease. In 1732 was printed, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, his sardonic epitaph on Colonel Charteris; this brilliant piece of invective, which was hugely admired, was said to "shine like the moon among the lesser fires" of wit in the age of Anne. In the hope of obtaining relief from his asthma and dropsy, Arbuthnot retired in 1734 to Hampstead, where he suffered so much that, in reply to an affectionate letter from Pope, he declared "the kindest wish of my friends is a euthanasia." He was taken back, for greater comfort, to his house in Cork Street, Burlington Gardens, where he died on the 27th of February 1735, and was buried in St. James's Church, Piccadilly. The writings of Arbuthnot were cast forth so carelessly, and, with unimportant exceptions, with so little indication of authorship, that he is perhaps of all eminent English writers the one about whose bibliography the greatest obscurity prevails.

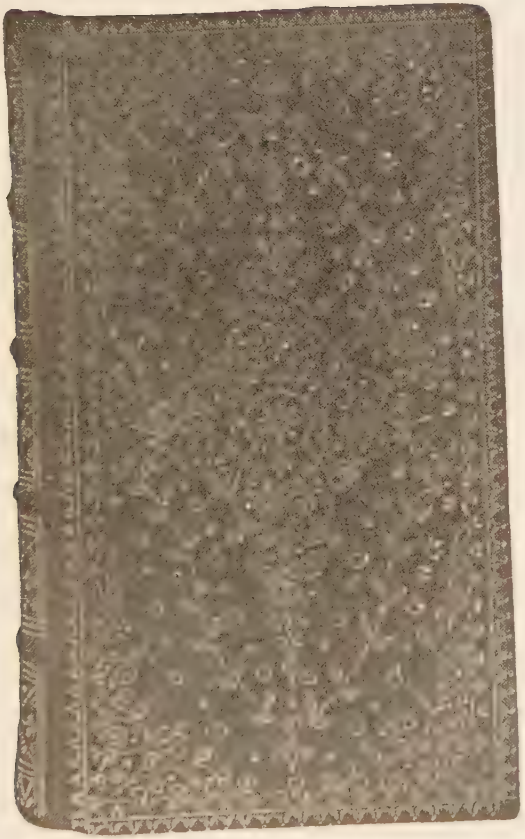
England and Scotland.

John [Bull] had a sister, a poor girl that had been starved at nurse; anybody would have guessed Miss to have been bred up under the influence of a cruel step-dame and John to be the fondling of a tender mother. John looked ruddy and plump, with a pair of cheeks like a trumpeter; Miss looked pale and wan, as if she had the green-sickness; and no wonder, for John was the darling, he had all the good bits, was crammed with good pullet, chicken, pig, goose and capon; while Miss had only a little oatmeal and water, or a dry crust without butter. John had his golden pippins, peaches and nectarines; poor Miss a crab-apple, sloe, or a blackberry. Master lay in the best apartment, with his bed-chamber toward the south sun. Miss lodged in a garret exposed to the north wind, which shrivelled her countenance; however, this usage, tho' it stunted the girl in her growth, gave her a hardy constitution; she had life and spirit in abundance, and knew when she was ill-used: now and then she would seize upon John's commons, snatch a leg of a pullet, or a bit of good beef, for which they were sure to go to fisticuffs. Master was indeed too strong for her, but Miss would not yield in the least point, but even when Master got her down, she would scratch and bite like a tiger; when he gave her a cuff on the ear, she would prick him with her knitting-needle.

Swift would have been well content to be named with Arbuthnot, but to find Mandeville's works bracketed with his own would have given him a paroxysm of indignation. Yet they were really so closely allied in some essentials of thought that it is natural to regard them together. BERNARD DE MANDEVILLE was a misanthropical Dutch doctor settled in London, who attacked the optimism of Shaftesbury in a coarse but highly effective and readable volume called *The Fable of the Bees*. For twenty years after this he was a pariah of the English press, writing odious, vulgar, extremely intelligent books, in which he extended his paradoxical thesis that private vices are public benefits. Mandeville was a daring thinker, who permitted no traditional prejudice, no habit of decency, to interfere with the progression of his ideas. He was by far the ablest of the English deists, and though all the respectability of his time drew away from him, and, like the Grand Jury of Middlesex, voted him a public nuisance, he was not without his very distinct influence on the progress of English literature. He was an emancipator of thought, a rude and contemptuous critic of the conventions. In himself base and ugly—for all his writings reveal a gross individuality—the brute courage of Mandeville helped English speculation to slip from its fetters. His style is without elegance, but, what is strange in a foreigner, of a remarkable homeliness and picturesque vigour.

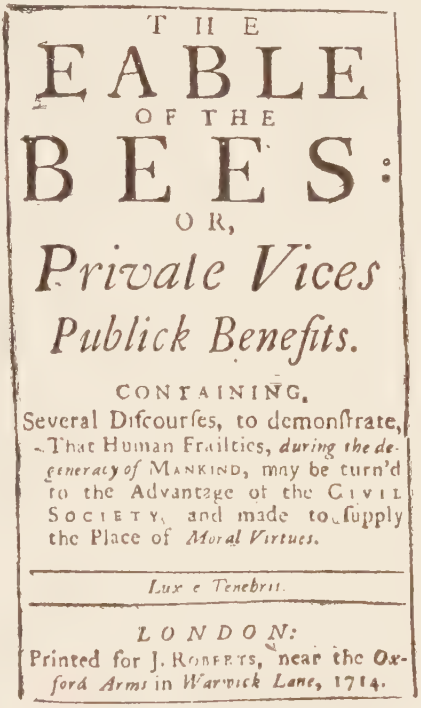
Bernard de Mandeville (1669?–1733)

Bernard de Mandeville (1669?–1733) was the son of a Dutch doctor, Michael de Mandeville, and was born at Dortrecht, as is supposed, in 1669. His father was a successful practitioner in Rotterdam, and Bernard was educated there; he left the Erasmus School for the University in the autumn of 1685. He took his degree as a physician at Leyden in 1691. We hear nothing more of him for fourteen years, when he appears in London, writing English with complete fluency, and publishing a poem, *The Grumbling Hive*, in which the nucleus of Mandeville's philosophy is already discovered. He must have come over to London to make his fortune, and he received a pension from certain Dutch merchants, probably in the spirit trade, for he is said to have been "hired by the distillers." With these obscure dealings in the liquor business he combined the practice of a doctor, but never achieved much success. In 1714 he republished his poem, with a very full commentary, called *An Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue*, and notes; and styled the whole thing *The Fable of the Bees; or Private Vices Public Benefits*. Little notice was taken, until, in 1723, what was practically a third edition appeared, much enlarged, with an essay on charity schools. The public now woke up to the insidious attacks of the Dutch doctor, and to his cynical system of utilitarian immorality. The Grand Jury of Middlesex presented the book as a nuisance, and it was attacked in the press and the pulpit. *The Fable of the Bees* enjoyed the compliment of refutation on all sides, and among those who devoted serious pains to the composition of replies were no less persons than Berkeley, Hutcheson, Law, and Dennis. Mandeville, in the zeal of disputation, said that he would destroy his book if it were proved to be immoral, and there was circulated a story to the effect that he did solemnly burn



Specimen of English Binding, 1727.

it on a bonfire before St. James's Palace in 1728. He denied this tale with indignation, and *The Fable of the Bees*, in spite of (or on account of) the countless attacks which were made against it, was steadily reprinted for half a century. The heresies of Mandeville were plausible, and were put forward in a bold, attractive form. He believed that extravagant private expenditure led to private wealth, and that the spendthrift was a benefactor. He thought that the "private vices" of mankind, the indulgence of evil desires, was of general advantage to the world. Whether in arguing that virtue was a mere fallacy, and that human nature was hopelessly and radically bad, Mandeville was partly serious, or was wholly enjoying the jest of mocking at the optimism of Shaftesbury, is uncertain. He was certainly a coarse, clear-eyed person, of great acumen and no delicacy, who saw, faintly and imperfectly, many of the discoveries of later science, which were not dreamed of by his contemporaries. It is remarkable that while all decent people still affected to be shocked by the immoral paradoxes of Mandeville, Dr. Johnson had the candour to admit that *The Fable of the Bees* had "opened his views into real life very much." Johnson also admired a medical treatise of Mandeville's on hypochondria, which appeared first in 1711, and was often reprinted. In 1725 the Dutch doctor published an *Inquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Executions in Tyburn*, a very picturesque volume, the best written of his works. Some of the books he published were of a class which gave his enemies juster occasion for scandal than *The Fable of the Bees*, but he was left untroubled. Franklin, when he came to England in 1724, found Mandeville the "soul" of a tavern club, and describes him as "a most entertaining, facetious companion." Lord Macclesfield enjoyed his conversation, which was apparently of the same paradoxical character as his writings. Why Mandeville came to England, and how he learned to write English with such perfect mastery, will probably never be known. No portrait of him is supposed to exist.


THE
FABLE
OF THE
BEES:
OR,
Private Vices
Publick Benefits.
CONTAINING,
Several Diſcourſes, to demonſtrate,
That Human Frailties, *during the degeneracy of* MANKIND, may be turn'd to the Advantage of the CIVIL SOCIETY, and made to ſupply the Place of *Moral Virtues.*
Lux e Tenebris.
LONDON:
Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the *Oxford Arms* in *Warwick Lane*, 1714.

Title-page of Bernard Mandeville's "Fable of the Bees"

If the great ones of the clergy, as well as the laity, of any country whatever had no value for earthly pleasures, and did not endeavour to gratify their appetites, why are envy and revenge so raging among them, and all the other passions improved and refined upon in courts of princes more than anywhere else; and why are their repasts, their recreations, and whole manner of living, always such as are approved of, coveted, and imitated by the most sensual people of the same country? If despising all visible decorations, they were only in love with the embellishments of the mind, why should they borrow so many of the implements, and make use of the most darling toys, of the luxurious? Why should a lord treasurer, or a bishop, or even a Grand Signior, or the Pope of Rome, to be good and virtuous, and endeavour

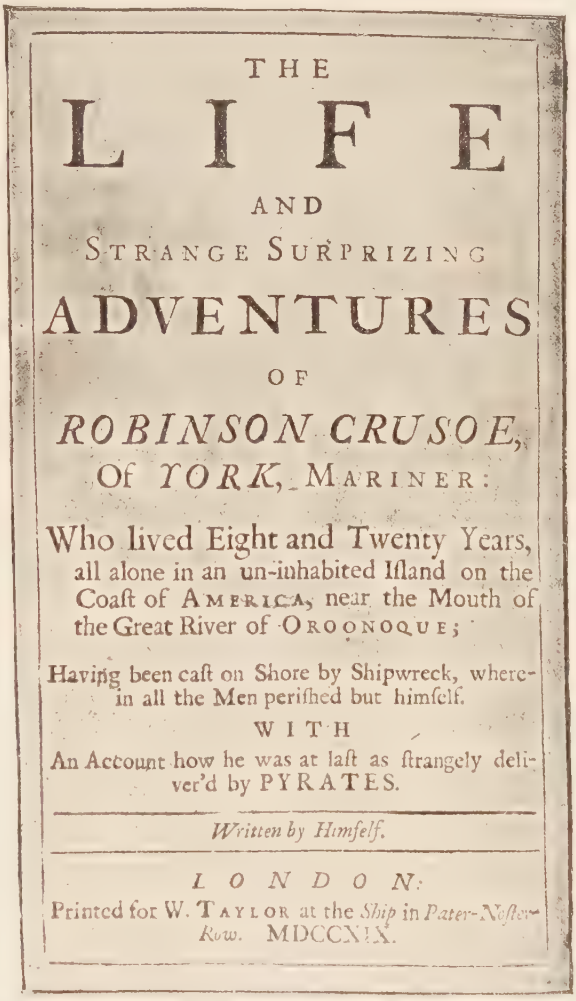
the conquest of his passions, have occasion for greater revenues, richer furniture, or a more numerous attendance as to personal service, than a private man? What virtue is it the exercise of which requires so much pomp and superfluity as are to be seen by all men in power? A man has as much opportunity to practise temperance that has but one dish at a meal, as he that is constantly served with three courses and a dozen dishes in each. One may exercise as much patience and be as full of self-denial on a few flocks, without curtains or tester, as in a velvet bed that is sixteen foot high. The virtuous possessions of the mind are neither charge nor burden: a man may bear misfortunes with fortitude in a garret, forgive injuries afoot, and be chaste, though he has not a shirt to his back; and therefore I shall never believe but that an indifferent skulker, if he was entrusted with it, might carry all the learning and religion that one man can contain, as well as a barge with six oars, especially if it was but to cross from Lambeth to Westminster; or that humility is so ponderous a virtue that it requires six horses to draw it.

Another writer who was kept outside the sacred ring of the Anne wits was DANIEL DEFOE, who comes in certain aspects close to Mandeville, but has a far wider range and variety. Several dissimilar writers are combined in Defoe, all, with one exception, of a pedestrian and common-place character. He was in his earlier years the very type of what was called "a hackney author," that is to say, a man of more skill than principle, who let out his pen for hire, ready at his best to support the Ministry with a pamphlet, at his worst to copy documents for stationers or lawyers. In these multifarious exercises Defoe was as copious as any journalist of our own time, and for a quarter of a century had a very large share in the miscellaneous writing of the day. The literary character which these humdrum productions illustrate seems to have been far from fascinating. All that we can praise in this Defoe of the pamphlets and journals is industry and a sort of lucid versatility. He was a factor in the vulgarisation of English, and he helped, in no small measure, to create a correct, easy, not ungraceful style for common use in the eighteenth century.

Daniel Defoe

But as he approached the age of sixty, Defoe suddenly appeared in a new light, as the inaugurator of a new school of English prose fiction.

In 1719 he published the immortal romance of *Robinson Crusoe*. Everything which had been written earlier than this in the form of an English novel faded at once into insignificance before the admirable sincerity and reality of this relation. It is difficult to conjecture what it was that suggested to the veteran drudge this extraordinary departure, so perfectly fresh, spirited, and novel. The idea of the European sailor marooned on an oceanic island had been used in 1713 by Marivaux in his novel of *Les Effets Surprenants*, but there is no further similarity of treatment. In his later picaresque romances Defoe is manifestly influenced by Le Sage, but *Robinson Crusoe* can scarcely be traced to French or Spanish models. It was an invention, a great, unexpected stroke of British genius, and it was immediately hailed as such by the rest of Europe. It was one of the first English books which was widely imitated on the Continent, and it gave direction and impetus to the new romantico-realistic conception of fiction all over the world. The French, indeed, followed Defoe more directly than the English themselves, and his most obvious disciples are Prévost, Rousseau, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. It was in his *Émile*, where he prefers Defoe as an educator to Aristotle, Pliny, or Buffon, that Rousseau finally drew the full admiration of Europe upon *Robinson Crusoe*. In England, however, the bourgeois romances of Defoe long remained without influence and without prestige, widely read indeed, but almost furtively, as vulgar literature fit for the kitchen and the shop.



THE
LIFE
AND
STRANGE SURPRIZING
ADVENTURES
OF
ROBINSON CRUSOE,
Of *YORK*, MARINER:
Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of AMERICA, near the Mouth of the Great River of OROONOQUE;
Having been caſt on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men periſhed but himſelf.
WITH
An Account how he was at laſt as ſtrangely deliver'd by PYRATES.
Written by Himſelf.
LONDON:
Printed for W. TAYLOR at the *Ship* in *Pater-Noſter-Row*. MDCCXIX.

Title-page of "Robinson Crusoe." First Edition, 1719

Daniel Foe, who called himself in later life **Defoe** (1661–1731), was the son of a Northamptonshire butcher, of the name of Foe, settled at the time of the writer's

niel Defoe
661–1731)

birth, in St. Giles', Cripplegate. The butcher was a dissenter, and intended his son for the ministry; he seems to have been at a Nonconformist training college on Newington Green from 1675 to 1680. He gave up the idea of becoming a minister, but his career is vague to us until 1685, when we find him engaged in the wholesale hosiery business in a court leading out of Cornhill. He went abroad occasionally, sometimes certainly to Spain; but his trade failed, and in 1692, being bankrupt, he had to fly his creditors. About this time he seems to have published the earliest of his innumerable pamphlets. We hear of him at Bristol, where he was called "The Sunday Gentleman," because he dared not face the bailiffs on week-days; and the next thing is that, for no apparent reason, he is appointed, in 1694, Accountant to the Glass Commissioners. This enabled him, perhaps, to pay his debts, and he started a factory for bricks and pantiles at Tilbury, which for a while was highly successful. Defoe now kept a coach and a private yacht. His post under Government was probably a mere decoy for the work of a mercenary journalist, and we find Defoe beginning to use his active pen in the King's service. It was probably under direction from the court that he now separated from the Nonconformists in his *Occasional Conformity* of 1698. In the year 1701 he first adopted the surname Defoe, and engaged with fervour in a national, royal, and Protestant propaganda. His first great popular success was with the rough and daring satire in verse, *The True-Born Englishman*, in which he hammered into his countrymen some hard facts. This "poem" sold to the amount of 80,000 copies, and Defoe was presented to the King. He was now, at the age of forty, a famous man, or at least a very popular one, but the death of William III. in 1702 was unfortunate for him. He wrote recklessly and vaguely, in prose and verse, and at last he scandalised all parties by his grotesque and ironical *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1703). Defoe fled, but presently determined to surrender; he was found guilty of seditious libel, and had his famous experience of the pillory. Pope, however, was not warranted in saying that Defoe stood "earless" or "unabashed," and the populace flung posies of flowers about him and drank enthusiastically in his honour at the foot of the pillory. He was taken to Newgate Prison, where he lay until the following summer, when he was released to be used for secret service by the Government. While he was imprisoned, he wrote as usual incessantly, and published a very remarkable newspaper, the *Review*, of which he wrote the whole himself; under several forms, this influential periodical continued to appear until 1715, all the time supporting whatever Ministry "Her Majesty was pleased to employ." All

Defoe's House at Stoke Newington

I am Sorry there Should be any Manner of Room for an Objection when We are So near a Conclusion of an Affair like This. I Should be Very Uneasie when I give you a Gift So much Value and Hope I do not Over Rate her Neither) There Should be any Reserv among us, that Should leav the least Room for Unkindness, or So much as thinking of Unkindness, no not So much as the Word

But there is a Reason why I am Tyed down to the Words of Your Letter, and I can not think the Baker Should Dispute So Small a Matter with us, after I Tell him So (Viz) that I am So Tyed Down: I can I believe many Wagers make him up the Little Sum of Five Pound a year, and when I Tell you That under my Hand, that I Shall Think my Self Oblig'd to do it Durante Vita, Shall and that I Shall Think my Self more Oblig'd to do So, than if you had it under Hand and Seal

But if you are not Willing to Trust me on my Parole, for So Small a Sum, and that According To the Great Treaty's abroad, there must be a Article in Our Negotiation: I Say if it must be So, I would fain save my Self in a Condition to Deny you Nothing, that you can ask, believing you will ask nothing of me that I ought to Deny.

When you Speak of a child's Fortune, that I Own you do Very Manfully: you must give me leave to Say Onely this, you must accept of this in Bar of any Claim from the City Customes; and I Doubt you will have but Too much Reason, Seeing I can Safely Hope to do Equally for all the Rest, as I Shall for my Dear Sophie: But after that you Shall Onely allow me to Say, and that you Shall Depend upon, that Ever it Shall please God to Bless me with, None Shall have a Dearer Share in it, and you Need no more than Remember, That She is, Ever Was and Ever will be My Dearest and Best Beloved. and let me add again I Hope you will Take it for a Mark of my Sincere and affectionate Concern for you, That I Wish you Her, and That I Say too I could give Her much more it Should be to you, with the Same affection

Yor Willm Maslery D.F

Jan 27 1728

Letter from Defoe

the central portion of Defoe's life has little relation to literature, and is so excessively obscure that there was no thread to guide the investigator through it, until Mr. William Lee published the result of his exhaustive researches in 1869. It is now known that Defoe did not withdraw from journalism in 1715, as was long supposed, but continued to edit and contribute to newspapers until 1726. In many ways Defoe may justly be considered as the founder of modern journalism, in its good as well as in its bad features. In the course of catering for his newspapers, Defoe interviewed with impartiality a surprising variety of persons, and became familiar with their modes of life and language; he thus prepared himself for his later and far more important work as an author. As early as 1706, in *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal*, he wove reality into a kind of naturalistic fiction. But his boldest and more original work in this line was not begun until he was approaching his sixtieth year. In 1719 Defoe published his celebrated romance of *Robinson Crusoe*, the first of its class in English literature. This was founded on a report of the adventures of a certain Alexander Selkirk (or Selcraig), who had been marooned on Juan Fernandez. The instant success of this wonderful book revealed to Defoe the fact that he had struck, as by accident, on a rich lode of gold. Perhaps he had already composed otner stories of this kind, for the almost simultaneous appearance of three such long novels as *Mr. Duncan Campbell*, *Captain Singleton*, and (perhaps) *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, all printed in 1720, is hardly to be accounted for except on the theory that the MSS. of them were already partly in existence when *Robinson Crusoe* became famous. These novels of Defoe's old age continued to appear with startling rapidity; before the end of 1722, *Moll Flanders*, *The Plague Year*, and *Colonel Jack* were added to the list. *Roxana*, the latest of his important romances, belongs to 1724. An innate vulgarity curiously characteristic, for all its genius, of the mind of Defoe, appears unabashed in his doubtless ironical *Complete English Tradesman* of 1725–7,

Illustration to "Robinson Crusoe"

which had a very considerable influence on its multitude of readers, but the bent of which, as Charles Lamb has justly said, is "to narrow and to degrade the heart." The composition of all these books was very lucrative, and Defoe retired to Newington, then a rural village, and built himself there a handsome house. Here he cultivated a large garden, wrote and studied, and enjoyed the society of "three lovely daughters." He had two sons, who were not quite satisfactory. The second of these sons seems to have borne some part in the painful exposure of Defoe, which occurred in 1726, when his connection with the Government, which had been kept absolutely dark from even his closest associates, became known. Defoe was much attacked, and probably suffered even in his pocket; "the old man cannot trouble you long," he meekly responded. In 1729, it is impossible to tell why, he had to disappear from his house in Newington, and hid himself in the neighbourhood of Greenwich, holding mysterious intercourse with his family. He complained of "a perjured, contemptible enemy," and he transferred his Newington estate to another name. He was, in all probability, still hiding from real or imaginary foes when death found him, on the 26th of April 1731, in a lodging in Ropemakers' Alley, Moorfields. It has been suggested, as a conjectural explanation of all this mystery, that he had become the victim of senile and insane delusions.

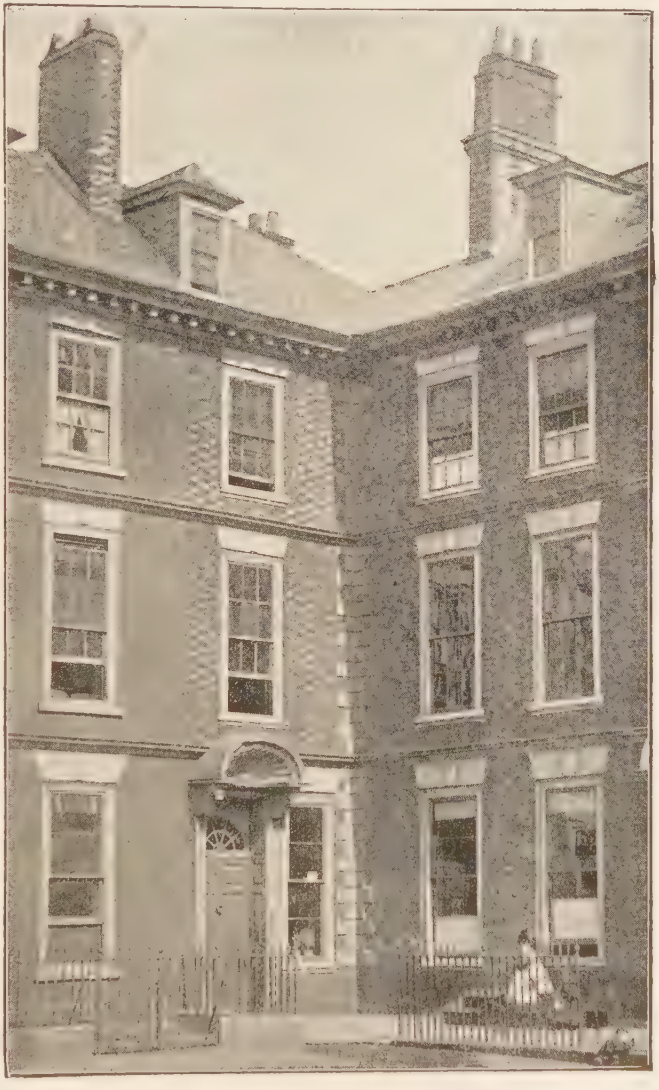
Illustration by Thomas Stothard to "Robinson Crusoe"

From "Robinson Crusoe."

During the long time that Friday has now been with me, and that he began to speak to me, and understand me, I was not wanting to lay a foundation of religious knowledge in his mind; particularly I asked him one time who made him? The poor creature did not understand me at all, but thought I had asked who was his father; but I took it by another handle, and asked him who made the sea, the ground we walked on, and the hills, and woods; he told me it was one Old

Benamuckee, that lived beyond all. He could describe nothing of this great person, but that he was very old; much older, he said, than the sea, or the land; than the moon, or the stars: I asked him then, if this old person had made all things, why did not all things worship him; he looked very grave, and with a perfect look of innocence, said, "All things do say O to him." I asked him if the people who die in his country went away anywhere; he said yes, they all went to Benamuckee; then I asked him whether these they eat up went thither too, he said yes.

From these things, I began to instruct him in the knowledge of the true God: I told him that the great Maker of all things lived up there, pointing up towards heaven; that He governs the world by the same power and providence by which He had made it; that He was omnipotent, could do everything for us, give everything to us, take everything from us; and thus by degrees I opened his eyes. He listened with great attention, and received with pleasure the notion of Jesus Christ being sent to redeem us, and of the manner of making our prayers to God, and His being able to hear us, even into heaven; he told me one day, that if our God could hear us up beyond the sun, He must needs be a greater God than their Benamuckee, who lived but a little way off, and yet could not hear till they went up to the great mountains where he dwelt, to speak to him. I asked him if ever he went thither to speak to him; he said no, they never went that were young men; none went thither but the old men, whom he called their Oowocakee, that is, as I made him explain it to me, their religious or clergy, and that they went to say O (so he called saying prayers), and then came back, and told them what Benamuckee said; by this I observed, that there is priestcraft, even amongst the most blinded ignorant



House where Defoe met Selkirk

From Wright's "Life of Defoe"

Pagans in the world; and the policy of making a secret religion, in order to preserve the veneration of the people to the clergy, is not only to be found in the Roman, but perhaps among all religions in the world, even among the most brutish and barbarous savages.

With Defoe and Mandeville we have strayed outside the inner circle of Queen Anne wits. We return to its centre in speaking of Bolingbroke and Berkeley. With the progress of criticism, however, the relative value of these two typical eighteenth-century names is being slowly but decisively reversed. The fame of BOLINGBROKE, once so universal, has dwindled to a mere shadow. He lives as an individual, not any longer as a writer. His diffuse and pompous contributions to theistical philosophy are now of interest mainly as exemplifying several of the faults of decaying classicism—its empty rhetoric, its vapid diction, its slipshod, inconsistent reasoning. In fact, if Bolingbroke demands mention here, it is mainly as a dreadful example, as the earliest author in which the school which culminated in Pope, Addison, and Swift is seen to have passed its meridian and to be declining. The cardinal defect of classicism was to be its tendency to hollowness, to intellectual insincerity and partisanship, and this defect is so clearly exposed in Bolingbroke that we read him no longer.

Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke

After the Portrait by Rigaud

y St.
-1751)

Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), was the son of Sir Henry St. John and of his wife, a daughter of the Earl of Warwick, and was born in London in October 1678. He was educated at Eton and at Christ Church, Oxford; he married at the age of twenty-two, entered Parliament, and was Secretary for War at twenty-six. He was raised to the peerage in 1712, and in 1714 threw in his lot with the Pretender. It was not until 1723 that he made peace with the English court and resumed political life. Most of his later life was spent in France. Bolingbroke died in London on the 12th of

December 1751. His literary life is of insignificant interest in comparison with the record of his political adventures. His *Dissertation on Parties* appeared in book-form in 1735, and the famous *Letter to Sir William Wyndham*, originally written in 1716, was posthumous, 1753. *The Idea of a Patriot King* bears no date, but was probably issued in 1735.

The opposite fate has rewarded the clear and starry genius of GEORGE BERKELEY. In his own day respected, but not highly regarded as a writer, he has gradually so strengthened his hold upon us by the purity of his taste, that in an age of predominance in prose we regard him as a master. In spite of Shaftesbury, Berkeley is the greatest English thinker between Locke and Hume, and as a pure metaphysician he is perhaps without a rival. His person and his character were as charming as his genius, and when he came up to London for the first time in 1713 he conquered all hearts. Pope expressed everybody's conviction when he declared that there had been given "to Berkeley every virtue under heaven." He had at that time already circulated his curious hypothesis of phenomenalism, his theory that what we see and touch is only a symbol of what is spiritual and eternal—that nothing is, but only seems to be. His writings, long pondered and slowly produced, culminated in 1744 in the brilliant and paradoxical treatise on the merits of tar-water, which was afterwards called *Siris*.

George Berkeley

After the Portrait by John Smibert

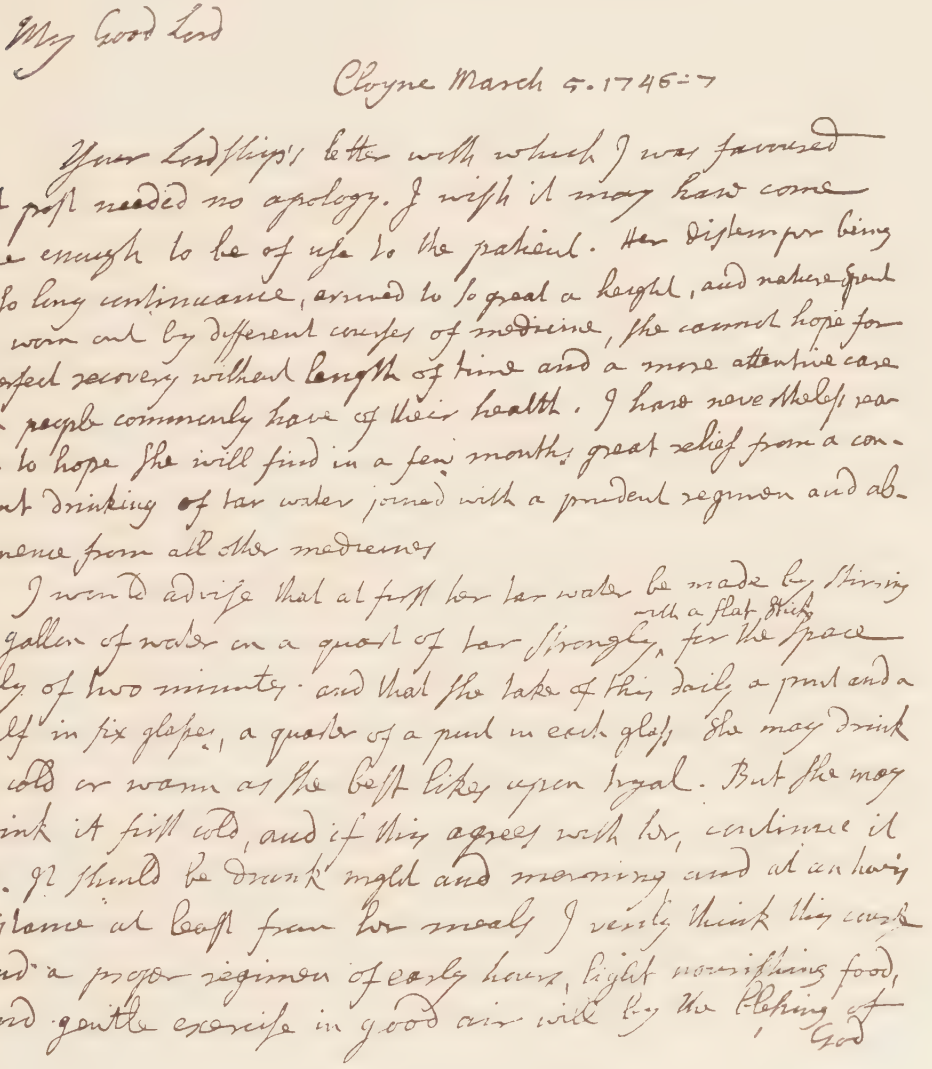
Locke had almost removed philosophy outside the confines of literature; Shaftesbury had shown that the philosopher could be elegant, florid, and illustrative; it remained for Berkeley to place it for a moment

on the level of poetry itself. There had, perhaps, been written in English no prose so polished as that of Berkeley. Without languor or insipidity, with a species of quiet, unstrained majesty, Berkeley achieved the summit of a classic style. No student of the age of Anne should fail to study that little volume of dialogues which Berkeley issued under the title of *Hylas and Philonous*. It belongs to the *annus mirabilis* 1713, when Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Addison, Steele, were all at the brilliant apex of their genius, and when England had suddenly combined to present such a galaxy of literary talent as was to be matched. or even approached, nowhere on the Continent of Europe.

George Berkeley (1685–1753)

George Berkeley (1685–1753) was the son of William Berkeley, of Thomastown in County Kilkenny, where he was born on the 12th of March 1685. When he was eleven years of age, he was sent to the famous grammar-school of Kilkenny, and four years later (March 1700) he entered Trinity College, Dublin. He distinguished himself in his studies, particularly in Greek, mathematics, and metaphysics, and in 1707 was elected fellow and tutor of his college. His earliest technical works belong to the same year. Berkeley now took holy orders. As early as 1705, and apparently without external influence of any kind, he had developed his famous theory of the non-existence of matter, and in 1709 he attempted to expound it in his *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision;* this was followed in 1710 by the *Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. He pushed his metaphysical refinements still further in his *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, in which he expressly asserts that the external existence of matter cannot be proved by all our senses united. He came to England in January 1713 for the purpose of printing this book, and was warmly welcomed in London literary society, his avowed object being "to make acquaintance with men of merit, rather than to engage the interests of those in power." He became the close friend of Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot, and Steele, and arrived in time to sit in Addison's box at the first performance of *Cato*. Everybody was charmed with Berkeley, and even Atterbury, from whom compliments were not easily wrung, said that "so much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and so much humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman." After some brilliant months in London, Berkeley was recommended by Swift to the Earl of Peterborough, who took him as chaplain on his embassy to the King of Sicily in November 1713. He spent ten months in Italy and France, and after a while passed in London, spent his time mainly in Italy until 1720. During these years he published nothing; but in 1721, after the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, he issued an appeal for moderate expenditure and simplicity of life, called *An Essay towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*. He went back to Dublin, being made lecturer in Divinity and in Greek to his college, and chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant. In 1723 he was lifted above financial anxiety by the sum of £4000 being left him by Swift's "Vanessa," who, however, had never spoken to Berkeley. In May 1724 he received a fresh addition to his fortune in the rich deanery of Derry. But no sooner was Berkeley settled there than he began to form the project of founding a missionary college in the Bermudas, for the purpose of

training young clergymen to evangelise America. Swift, who took a somewhat cynical view of the matter, nevertheless commended it for Berkeley's sake to Carteret, saying, "I entreat you either to keep one of the first men in this kingdom quiet at home, or else assist him to compass his romantic design, which is



My Good Lord

Cloyne March 5. 1746-7

Your Lordship's letter with which I was favoured last post needed no apology. I wish it may have come time enough to be of use to the patient. Her distemper being of so long continuance, arrived to so great a height, and nature spent and worn out by different courses of medicine, she cannot hope for a perfect recovery without length of time and a more attentive care than people commonly have of their health. I have nevertheless reason to hope she will find in a few months great relief from a constant drinking of tar water joined with a prudent regimen and abstinence from all other medicines

I would advise that at first her tar water be made by stirring with a flat stick a gallon of water on a quart of tar strongly, for the space only of two minutes. and that she take of this daily a pint and a half in six glasses, a quarter of a pint in each glass. She may drink it cold or warm as she best likes upon trial. But she may drink it first cold, and if this agrees with her, continue it so. It should be drunk mild and morning and at an hour's distance at least from her meals. I verily think this cure and a proper regimen of early hours, light nourishing food, and gentle exercise in good air will by the blessing of God

Extract from a Letter of George Berkeley's

very noble and generous." The members of the Scriblerus Club were called together to dine with Lord Bathurst, for the purpose of rallying Berkeley out of his project, but he listened quietly to their jokes and then laid his plans before them with such astonishing force of enthusiasm, that the wits stood up together and exclaimed, "Let us all set out with him immediately!" In June 1725 Berkeley contrived to get from the Government a charter for his college, and

published a *Proposal*. His ideas were accepted in London with extraordinary zeal, and a vote of £20,000 to endow the missionary university was carried with acclamation through both Houses of Parliament. It was not, however, until September 1728, that, having married a month before, Berkeley set sail for America, and then, not for Bermuda, but Rhode Island. Sir Robert Walpole, however, was determined to wreck the scheme, and from information received from the Treasury, the Bishop of London recommended Berkeley to return in 1731. He had resigned his deanery, but on the written understanding that the deed should not take force until after the Government had paid the grant of £20,000; he was therefore able to return to Derry. In 1733 Berkeley was made Bishop of Cloyne, having returned the year before to literature, by the publication of his *Alciphron*, the largest of his works, which he had composed in Rhode Island. He lived at Cloyne from 1734 to 1752, although in 1745 he was offered the much more valuable diocese of Clogher. He set up in the palace at Cloyne a distillery of tar-water, a medicine which had long attracted him, because he conceived it to have the anti-materialistic quality of being charged with "pure invisible fire, the most subtle and elastic of bodies." Accordingly, in 1744, Berkeley published his *Chain of Philosophical Reflections concerning the Virtues of Tar-Water*, to which, in the second and all subsequent editions, was given the more convenient title of *Siris*. This extraordinary work has been more read than any other of its author's writings, and exhibits in perfection the admirable beauty of his style. It was expanded by *Farther Thoughts on Tar-Water* in 1752. In the summer of that year Berkeley seems to have grown tired of his long exile at Cloyne, and asked George II. to permit him to resign. The King replied that he might reside wherever he liked, but that live and die a Bishop he should. Berkeley, therefore, in the summer of 1752, found occasion in his son George's proceeding to Oxford as a student of Christ Church, to settle near him, and he took a house in Holywell Street. But his residence there was short, for on the evening of Sunday, January 14, 1753, appearing to have never been in better health, and having just expounded a chapter of the first Corinthians to his family, Berkeley withdrew to the sofa for a nap, from which he never awakened. He was buried in the cathedral of Christ Church, Oxford. It was not Pope alone, but all his contemporaries, who attributed "to Berkeley every virtue under heaven." No one, in that age of plain speaking, had a word to say to his disadvantage. His beauty of person, his grace of manner, his kindliness, his unselfishness, his intelligence, his simplicity are celebrated by all who knew him; even Voltaire was impressed with his goodness of heart, and in Swift's eyes he was the one "absolute philosopher." As one of his clergy said, "If ever there lived a Christian, it was Dr. Berkeley."

> I desire it may be considered that most men want leisure, opportunity, or faculties, to derive conclusions from their principles, and establish morality on a foundation of human science. True it is—as St. Paul observes—that the "invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen;" and from thence the duties of natural religion may be discovered. But these things are seen and discovered by those alone who open their eyes and look narrowly for them. Now, if you look throughout the world, you shall find but few of these narrow inspectors and inquirers, very few who make it their business to analyse opinions, and pursue them to their rational source, to examine whence truths spring, and how they are inferred. In short, you shall find all men full of opinions, but knowledge only in a few.

It is impossible, from the nature and circumstances of humankind, that the multitude should be philosophers, or that they should know things in their causes. We see every day that the rules, or conclusions alone, are sufficient for the shopkeeper to state his account, the sailor to navigate his ship, or the carpenter to measure his timber; none of which understand the theory, that is to say, the grounds and reasons either of arithmetic or geometry. Even so in moral, political, and religious matters, it is manifest that the rules and opinions early imbibed at the first dawn of understanding, and without the least glimpse of science, may yet produce excellent effects, and be very useful to the world; and that, in fact, they are so, will be very visible to every one who shall observe what passeth round about him.

The Spirit of Plants.

The balsam or essential oil of vegetables contains a spirit, wherein consist the specific qualities, the smell and taste of the plant. Boerhave holds the native presiding spirit to be neither oil, salt, earth, nor water, but somewhat too fine and subtle to be caught alone and rendered visible to the eye. This, when suffered to fly off, for instance, from the oil of rosemary, leaves it destitute of all flavour. This spark of life, this spirit or soul, if we may so say, of the vegetable, departs without any sensible diminution of the oil or water wherein it was lodged.

It should seem that the forms, souls, or principles of vegetable life subsist in the light or solar emanation, which in respect to the macrocosm is what the animal spirit is to the microcosm—the interior tegument, the subtle instrument and vehicle of power. No wonder, then, that the *ens primum* or *scintilla spirituosa*, as it is called, of plants should be a thing so fine and fugacious as to escape our nicest search. It is evident that nature at the sun's approach vegetates, and languishes at his recess; this terrestrial globe seeming only a matrix disposed and prepared to receive life from his light. . . . The luminous spark which is the form or life of a plant, from whence its differences and properties flow, is somewhat extremely volatile.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

After the Portrait by F. Zincke

The most prominent woman-writer of the first half of the eighteenth century was **Lady Mary Pierrepont** (1689–1762), daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, afterwards Duke of Kingston, who was born in lodgings in Covent Garden, on the 26th May 1689, and who married Edward Wortley Montagu in 1712. By means of her husband, who was much older than she, Lady Mary was introduced to Addison, Congreve, and Steele, and her earliest writings were suppressed by the advice of the first-named. She persevered, however, and in 1716 her *Court Poems* were privately and anonymously printed. In that year she left England with her husband, and remained in Vienna and Constantinople until the autumn of 1718; her letters during this period were of high value and interest. Returning to London, she made the personal acquaintance of Pope, with whom she

had been in correspondence. A violent friendship sprang up between them and blazed for awhile, but had died down when, about 1723, it ended in a great explosion of mutual rage and ill-breeding. In 1739 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu left her husband under circumstances which have never been lucidly explained, and was a resident abroad, mainly in Italy, for the next twenty-two years. She was in Venice in 1761 when the news of her husband's death reached her; she was in poor health, but she determined to return to England to settle his estate. She arrived in January 1762, and did not return, but died in her house in Montagu Square on the 21st August 1762. She is remarkable for having introduced into western Europe the practice of inoculation for small-pox, which she tried first on her own son, Edward, at Constantinople in 1715. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was a woman of a fiery spirit, penetrated with literature and curiosity, ardent and unabashed, insolent and generous. Her letters, which have neither the tenderness nor the eloquence of a Sevigné, testify to the ripeness of her judgment and the clearness of her eye.

FROM A LETTER FROM CONSTANTINOPLE.

The climate is delightful in the extremest degree. I am now sitting, this present fourth of January [1718], with the windows open, enjoying the warm shine of the sun, while you are freezing over a sad sea-coal fire; and my chamber set out with carnations, roses and jonquils, fresh from my garden. I am also charmed with many points of the Turkish law, to our shame, be it spoken, better designed and better executed than ours; particularly the punishment of convicted liars (triumphant criminals in our country, God knows!) They are burnt in the forehead with a hot iron, being proved the authors of any notorious falsehood. How many white foreheads should we see disfigured, how many fine gentlemen would be forced to wear their wigs as low as their eyebrows, were this law in practice with us!

Benjamin Hoadly

After the Portrait by Mrs. Hoadly

Theology, which had taken so prominent a place in the literature of the seventeenth century, fell into insignificance after the year 1700. We have already spoken of Clarke, a stiff and tiresome writer, but the best of his class. To compare Hoadly with Massillon, or Sherlock with Saurin, is but to discover how great an advantage the French still preserved over us,

who had never, even in the palmy days of our theology, enjoyed a Bossuet. Perhaps the most spirited contribution to religious literature published in the early years of the century was Law's *Serious Call*, a book isolated from its compeers in all qualities of style and temper, the work of a Christian mystic who seemed to his contemporaries that hateful thing "an enthusiast."

Benjamin Hoadly (1676–1761) was born at Westerham, in Kent, on the 14th of November 1676. He was the second son of the Rev. Samuel Hoadly, who gave him his early education, and then sent him direct to St. Catherine Hall, Cambridge. He became an active and useful London clergyman, of advanced political and religious views. In 1715 he was made Bishop of Bangor, and it is recorded, as a singular proof of Hoadly's simplicity and absence of ambition, that "when he went to Court to kiss hands on being made a bishop, he did not know the way upstairs." His famous treatise on *The Principles and Practices of the Non-Jurors*, which caused a sort of earthquake in the Church of England, was published in 1716. Hoadly's brilliant sermon on *The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ* was preached on the 31st of March 1717. The celebrated Bangorian Controversy was the result. In spite of the rage of his enemies, Hoadly was rapidly promoted, through Hereford and Salisbury, to the princely see of Winchester in 1734. Throughout the storms which raged around him, Hoadly preserved a dignified and apostolic calm, and he was a man of undoubted greatness of character. He was the reputed author of more than fifty publications, mainly controversial. He reached his eighty-sixth year, and "was so happy as to live long enough to reap the full earthly reward of his labours, to see his Christian and moderate opinions prevail over the kingdom, and the Nonconformists at a very low ebb, for want of the opposition and persecution they were used to experience." Hoadly died in his palace at Chelsea, on the 17th of April 1761, having outlived all opposition, "beloved and revered by all good men."

Thomas Sherlock

After an Engraving by J. M'Ardell

Thomas Sherlock (1678–1761), the elder son of the famous divine, Dr. William Sherlock, was born in London, where his father was rector of St. George's, Botolph Lane. He was educated at Eton and at St. Catherine Hall, Cambridge,

of which he became a fellow. At the early age of twenty-six, he was appointed to succeed his father as Master of the Temple, and soon became eminent as a preacher. In 1714 he was made Master of his College, in 1716 Dean of Chichester, and soon afterwards became prominent as a protagonist in the great Bangorian Controversy. Sherlock became successively Bishop of Bangor, Salisbury, and London, and refused Canterbury. He continued to hold the Mastership of the Temple for fifty years. Sherlock's *Sermons* were published, in four volumes, in 1755–6. He died July 18, 1761, after a very long and painful illness, and was buried at Fulham.

William Law (1686–1761) was the son of a grocer at King's Cliffe, in Northamptonshire. He was sent as a sizar, in 1705, to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and ultimately became a fellow. He was a strong non-juror, and gradually developed more and more austere religious views. In 1726 he made a certain stir with his treatises on *Christian Perfection*. In 1727 he became tutor to Edward Gibbon, who was twenty years of age, and it would perhaps be exacter to say, as the historian does, that Law was already "the much-honoured friend and spiritual director" of the Gibbon family. In 1728 the *Serious Call* was published, and he began to be surrounded by disciples, among whom were the Wesleys. Law seems to have resided at Putney with the Gibbons from 1727 to 1738, after which he went back to his parental home at King's Cliffe, where he founded a semi-monastic settlement. His mystical and philanthropic schemes were enthusiastically supported by two ladies of mature years, Miss Hester Gibbon and Mrs. Hutcheson. Law died, almost in the act of singing a hymn, in his interesting religious house at King's Cliffe, on the 9th of April 1761.

Allan Ramsay
From an Engraving

The earliest signs of impatience with the rigidity of literary rule came from Scotland, where a certain lyrical independence of Southern traditions had preserved all through the seventeenth century something of the old folk-song freshness. The actual value of these vernacular pieces—the knack of them was retained in one family, the Sempills of Beltrees, for three generations—was small, but they led on without a break to Allan Ramsay, and to such useful poetical antiquaries as Lady Wardlaw and, in England, Oldys.

Allan Ramsay (1686–1758) was born at Leadhills in Lanarkshire, on the 15th of October 1686. At the age of fifteen he came up to Edinburgh to be apprenticed

to a wig-maker. His earliest publications were parochially humorous, and his first ambitious essay was a continuation of King James' *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, 1718. Ramsay did a great deal for the revival of Scottish song by his anthologies, *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, 1724–27, and *The Evergreen*, 1724. In 1725 he published his best work, the excellently sustained pastoral play of *The Gentle Shepherd*, the life of Ramsay. He retired from the wig-making business, and bought a bookseller's shop, "at the sign of the *Mercury*, opposite to Niddry's Wynd," where for thirty years he was visited by every literary person who appeared in Edinburgh, and where, behind his counter, he broke into verse at the least excuse, "e'en at the shagging of a feather." In 1743 he built himself an eight-sided house on Castle Hill, but did not retire from business until 1755. Ramsay died in this his "goose-pie," as Edinburgh called it, on the 7th of January 1758. Ramsay completed that celebrated poetical hoax—the earliest of eighteenth-century forgeries — the ballad of *Hardy Knute*, which had been begun by **Elizabeth, Lady Wardlaw** (1677–1727). One of the first who took an intelligent interest in the bibliography of British poetry was **William Oldys** (1696–1761), of Lincoln, who was Norroy king-at-arms. He was not only a pioneer in the study of texts and states, but the author of some very graceful verses.

William Oldys

From an Engraving by Balston

The period of English literature which we have now roughly sketched is one of the most clearly defined and homogeneous in our history. In its consideration we are not troubled by the variety and diversity of its aims, by the multitude of its proficients, or by the distribution of its parts. All is definite, exiguous; all, or almost all, is crystallised round a single point; that point is common-sense applied to the imagination, to the highest parts of man. In all the expressions of this definite spirit, whether in Pope or Clarke, in Addison or Berkeley, we find a tendency to the algebraic formula, rather than to colour, fancy, or fire. In other words, pure intelligence does the work of literature, intelligence applied alike to concrete forms and abstract ideas, actively and energetically applied, without sentimentality or enthusiasm. The age of Anne succeeded in raising this literature of mathematical intelligence to the highest pitch of elegant refinement. But before it closed there were manifest signs of the insufficiency of such a manner to support a complex artistic system.

What in the hands of Pope and Addison was so brilliant and novel

that all the world was charmed, could but prove in those of their disciples cold, mechanical, and vapid. There were very dangerous elements in the optimism of the time, in its profound confidence in the infallibility of its judgment, in the case with which it had become accustomed to rigid rules of composition, in the dry light of formalism which by it was so prompt to observe art and nature. These might satisfy for a moment, might produce a single crop of splendid literature, but they bore no fruit for the morrow. Even the prevalent admiration of the authors of antiquity was a source of danger, for these great fountain-heads of imagination were regarded not as they really wrote, but as seen distorted through the spectacles of the French Jesuit critics. The poets of antiquity were cultivated as incomparable masters of rhetoric, and on the basis of Horace, and even of Homer, there was founded a poetry totally foreign to antique habits of thought.

We have not, however, to consider what dangers lay ahead of the system, but what it produced in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and for this, within limits, we can have little but praise. England now joined, and even led, the movement of European nations from which she had hitherto been excluded as a barbarian. In a "polite" age the English writers became the most polite. Pope and Addison had nothing more to learn from their Continental contemporaries; they became teachers themselves. In their hands the English language, which had been a byword for furious individuality and unbridled imaginative oddity, became a polished and brilliant instrument in the hands of an elegant and well-bred race. So far, if we go no further, all was well. A little group of scholars and gentlemen, closely identified in their personal interests, had taken English literature under their care, and had taught it to express with exquisite exactitude their own limited and mundane sensations. These were paving the way for a frigid formalism which would become intolerable in the hands of their followers; but in their own day, in their brief Augustan age, the direct result was not merely brilliant in itself, but of an infinite benefit to English as a vehicle for an easy and rapid exercise of the intelligence.

CHAPTER IV

THE AGE OF JOHNSON

1740–1780

THE period which we have just quitted was one of effort concentrated in one middle-class coterie in London, an age of elegant persiflage and optimistic generalisation marshalled by a group of highly civilised and "clubable" wits. That at which we have now arrived was the exact opposite. Its leading exponents were not associates, or, in most cases, even acquaintances; its labours were not in any large degree identified with London, but with places all over the English-speaking world. From 1712 to 1735 attention is riveted on the mutual intercourse of the men who are writing, and then upon their works. From 1740 to 1780 the movements of literature, rather than those of men of letters, are our theme. Solitary figures closely but unconsciously and accidentally related to other solitary figures, ships out of call of one another, but blown by the same wind—that is what the age of Johnson presents to us.

George II.

After the Portrait by Thomas Worlidge

If the combination of personal communication, so interesting in the earlier age, is lacking now, it is made up for to us by the definition of the principal creative impulses, which prove, to our curiosity and surprise, independent of all personal bias. The similarity between Swift and Arbuthnot, between Pope and Parnell, is easily explained by their propinquity. But how are we to account for the close relation of Gray and Collins, who never met; of Fielding and Richardson, who hated one another at a distance; of Butler

at Bristol, and Hume at Ninewells? This central period of the eighteenth century took a wider and more democratic colouring; its intellectual life was more general, we had almost said more imperial. Letters could no longer be governed by the dictatorship of a little group of sub-aristocratic wits met in a coffee-house to dazzle mankind. The love of literature had spread in all directions, and each province of the British realm contributed its genius to the larger movement.

In poetry, which must occupy us first, the forces which now attract our almost undivided attention are not those which appealed to contemporary criticism. Pope and his school had given a perfect polish to the couplet, had revived a public interest in satire and philosophic speculation in verse, had canonised certain forms of smooth and optimistic convention, had, above all, rendered the *technique* of "heroic verse" a thing which could be studied like a language or a science. It was strictly in accordance with the traditions of literature that no sooner was the thing easy to do than the best poets lost interest in doing it. It was Thomson who made the first resistance to the new classical formula, and it is, in fact, Thomson who is the real pioneer of the whole romantic movement, with its return to nature and simplicity. This gift would be more widely recognised than it is if it had not been for the poet's timidity, his easy-going indolence. The *Winter* of Thomson, that epoch-making poem, was published earlier than the *Dunciad* and the *Essay on Man*, earlier than *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Political History of the Devil;* it belongs in time to the central "period of Queen Anne." But in spirit, in temper, in style, it has nothing whatever to do with that age, but inaugurates another, which, if we consider exactly, culminated, after a slow but direct ascent, in Wordsworth.

Frederick, Prince of Wales

After the Portrait by Bartholomew Dandridge

The positive interest which the poetry of the middle of the eighteenth century now possesses for us may be slight; its relative or historical interest

1740 Aug
1 Dr Johnson
2 Bp of Salisbury (D. Gilbert)
3 La Harcourt
4 Mr Cibber (Colley)
5 Mr Garrick
6 Mrs Pratt (The Singer)
7 Mr Nash
8 Mrs Chudleigh (Duchs of Kingston)
9 Mr Pitt (Earl of Chatham)
10 A Speaker (The Speaker)
11 Ld Powis
12 Duchs of Norfolk
13 Miss Bankes
14 Lady Lincoln
15 Mr Lyttelton (Afterwards Lord Lyttleton)
16 The Baron (A German Gamester)
17 Anonym (Mr Richardson)
18 Mrs Onslow
19 Miss Onslow
20 Mrs Johnson (the Drs Wife)
21 Mr Whitson
22 [Logan the Artist] [23 The Woman of the Wells]

Printed 20th May 1804, for Richard Phillips, No 71 St Pauls Church Yard

is very great. In it we see English verse timidly reasserting its characteristic qualities and resuming forbidden powers. The change was gradual, without revolution, without violent initiative. Passion did not suddenly return in its bolder forms, but an insidious melancholy shook the pensive bosom. For nearly eighty years the visual world, in its broader forms, had scarcely existed for mankind; it was not to be expected that shy and diffident poets, such as were those of this new period, men in most cases of subdued vitality, should flash out into brilliant colourists and high-priests of pantheism. They did their work gingerly and slowly; they introduced an obvious nature into their writings; they painted, with a deprecating pencil, familiar scenes and objects. With Thomson they removed the fog that had obscured the forms of landscape, with Gray they asserted the stately beauty of mountains, with Young they proclaimed anew the magic of moonlight, with Walpole they groped after the principles of Gothic architecture. That their scenes were painted in grey and greenish neutral tint, that their ruined arches were supported on modern brickwork, that falsity and fustian, a hollow eloquence and a frigid sententiousness spoiled many of their enterprises, is not to the point. We must occupy ourselves, not with what they failed to do, but with their faltering successes. They were the pioneers of romanticism, and that is what renders them attractive to the historian.

Nor was it in England only, but over all Europe, that the poets of the age of Johnson were the pioneers of romantic feeling and expression. In the two great movements which we have indicated—in a melancholy sensibility pointing to passion, in a picturesqueness of landscape leading to direct nature-study—the English were the foremost of a new intellectual race. As a child of the eighteenth century, Stendhal, reminded the French, "Le pittoresque—comme les bonnes diligences et les bateaux à vapeur—nous vient d'Angleterre." It came to France partly through Voltaire, who recorded its manifestations with wonder, but mainly through Rousseau, who took it to his heart. Not instantly was it accepted. The first translator of the *Seasons* into French dared not omit an apology for Thomson's "almost hideous imagery," and it took years for the religious melancholy of Young to sink into German bosoms. But when there appeared the *Nouvelle Heloïse*, a great and catastrophic work of passion avowedly built up on the teaching of the English poets of the funereal school, a book owing everything to English sensibility, then the influence of British verse began, and from 1760 to 1770 the vogue and imitation of it on the Continent was in full swing. To the European peoples of that time Young was at least as great an intellectual and moral portent as Ibsen has been to ours.

It was in a comparative return to a sombre species of romanticism, and in a revolt against the tyranny of the conventional couplet, that these poets mainly affected English literature. JAMES THOMSON is at the present hour but tamely admired. His extraordinary freshness, his new outlook into the whole world of imaginative life, deserve a very different recognition from what is commonly awarded to him. The *Hymn* which closes the *Seasons*

was first published in 1730, when Pope was still rising towards the zenith of his fame. It recalled to English verse a melody, a rapture which had been entirely unknown since Milton's death, more than sixty years before. We may be told that the close observation of natural phenomena which made

James Thomson

After an Engraving by James Basire

the four books of the *Seasons* so illustrious had never, although scouted or disregarded, been entirely lost. The names of Lady Winchelsea, of Gay, even of John Philips, may be quoted to prove to us that the poets still had eyes, and knew a hawk from a hernshaw. But these pedestrian studies of nature had no passion in them; they were but passages of an inventory or of

Seem to the ſhivering Sailor from afar,
Shapeleſs, and white, an Atmoſphere of Clouds.
Projected huge, and horrid, o'er the ~~Main,~~ Deep,
Alps frown on *Alps*; or ruſhing hideous down,
As if old Chaos was again return'd,
Shake the firm Pole, and make an Ocean boil.
~~Whence heap'd abrupt along the howling Shore,~~
And into various Shapes (as Fancy leans)
Work'd by the Wave, the cryſtal Pillars heave,
Swells the blue Portico, the *Gothic* Dome
Shoots fretted up; and Birds, and Beaſts, and Men,
~~Riſe into mimic Life, and ſink by turns.~~
The reſtleſs Deep itſelf cannot reſiſt
The binding Fury; but in all it's Rage
Of Tempeſt taken by the boundleſs Froſt,
Is many a Fathom to the Bottom chain'd,
And bid to roar no more: a bleak Expanſe,
Shagg'd o'er with wavy Rocks, chearleſs, and void
Of every Life, that from the dreary Months
Flies conſcious ſouthward. Miſerable they!

Who,

Facsimile MS. cor

* Still prosing on, beyond Gorneas Lake,
And Hecla flaming thro' a Waste of snow,
And farthest Greenland, to the Pole itself,
Where fainting gradual Life at length goes out,
Spreads wrecks her solitary Twilight;
And, hovering o'er the wild ~~Expanse~~ Scene,
Beholds new seas beneath another Sky.
~~Thro'~~ In a Palace of ~~eternal~~ Ice
Here Winter holds his unrejoicing Court;
And tho' his airy Hall the Land his rule
Of driving Gentleness is forever heard:
Here the grim Tyrant meditates his wrath;
Here wings his Winds with all-subduing Frost;
Moulds his fierce Hail, & treasures up his Snows,
With which he now oppresses Half the Globe.
Hence winding eastward to the Tartarian Coast,
The sweeps along the hoarding Margin of the Main;
Where undissolving from the first of

a still-life painting. With Thomson, and mainly with his majestic *Hymn*, another quality came back to poetry, the ecstasy of worship awakened by the aspect of natural beauty. We can but wonder what lines such as

> " Ye forests bend, ye harvests wave, to Him ;
> Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,
> As home he goes beneath the joyous moon,"

could have meant to readers such as Warburton and Hurd. We may answer—To them, as to Johnson, they could have meant nothing at all ; and here began the great split between the two classes of eighteenth-century students of poetry—those who clung to the old forms, and exaggerated their aridity, down to the days of Hayley and Darwin ; and those who falteringly and blindly felt their way towards better things through Gray, and Percy's *Reliques*, and Warton's revelation of the Elizabethans.

James Thomson (1700–1748) was the eldest son of the Reverend Thomas Thomson and his wife, Beatrice Trotter, well-born people of the Scottish Border. Mr. Thomson had since 1692 been minister of Ednam in Roxburghshire, and the poet was born in the manse there on the 11th of September 1700. Next year the family removed to a parish close to Jedburgh. Here, in early childhood, Thomson attracted the notice of Robert Riccaltoun, a local poet of some merit, and soon began to write verses. In 1715 he was sent up to Edinburgh University, being intended for the Church, and he remained there for ten years. Of his youth we know little, save that he was extremely susceptible to local superstitions, and so much afraid of ghosts that, even when at college, he would rush roaring out of the room if he was left alone in the dark. His father died in 1718, as was believed "under the oppression of diabolical malignity," having rashly undertaken to lay that celebrated spook, the Woolie Ghost. At Edinburgh Thomson was gradually drawn away from divinity towards literature, and in his twenty-fifth year he determined to adventure to London ; he sailed from Leith, and arrived almost destitute, having been robbed even of a handkerchief in which he had tied up his letters of introduction. He found

The Perishing Traveller

Illustration by Stothard to Thomson's " Winter"

patrons, however, and was received by the wits with remarkable cordiality. In March 1726 he published *Winter* as a folio pamphlet; it was highly successful, and from this time forward Thomson seems to have floated easily on the social tide. Of his letters from this period several have been preserved, and they give evidence of much lightness of spirits and an almost childish *naïveté*. *Summer*, addressed to Bubb Dodington in too humble a style of eulogy, and *Spring*, addressed to the Countess of Hertford, indicate two main sources of the poet's early prosperity. The Countess was a blue-stocking, and invited Thomson to stay at her seat near Marlborough, where he "composed one of his *Seasons*," probably *Autumn*. Johnson tells us that the poet took more pleasure in carousing with my lord than in directing the studies of my lady, and was therefore never invited again. In 1730 the *Seasons* appeared complete, with the additions of *Autumn* and *A Hymn*. But by this time Thomson had turned with hopefulness to the stage, although his first tragedy was not a success. At a critical moment, one character, immersed in woe, had to moan out the words—

The Gleaners

Illustration by Stothard to Thomson's "Autumn"

"O, Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!"

which the wags instantly took up and parodied as—

"O, Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!"

and this was more than even Mrs. Oldfield's art could counteract. The poet was now selected to accompany on the Grand Tour a young Talbot, son of the Solicitor-General, with whom he saw France and Italy through 1730 and 1731. On his return he began, and in 1734–6 he published, in five successive parts, his gigantic failure, the didactic poem of *Liberty*. Mr. Talbot having died, and his father having been made Lord Chancellor, Thomson received in 1735 the office of Secretary of Briefs under the latter. This patron died in 1737, when Thomson printed a dignified poem in his praise. Having lost his place, the poet fell into debt and was arrested; Quin the actor found him in a spunging house and released him, although they were strangers, purely on account of the pleasure he had received from reading Thomson's poetry. Meeting the Prince of

James Thomson.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY JOHN PATOUN.

Wales shortly after, and being asked about his affairs, Thomson admitted that "they were in a more poetical posture than formerly," and the Prince gave him a pension of £100, which was paid until the year of the poet's death, when it was unkindly withdrawn. Misfortune generally attended Thomson's pieces on the stage, where the ill-success of his "untoward heroines" became proverbial, but those dramas were sometimes lucrative in book form. In particular, there is reason to believe that his poetical tragedy of *Edward and Eleonora*, which was prohibited on the stage in 1739, brought in much profit, as a little volume, in subscription. The masque of *Alfred*, which in 1740 Mallet and Thomson composed to amuse the Prince of Wales in the gardens of Cliefden, is memorable for containing the song *Rule Britannia*, which is believed, but without absolute certainty, to be the work of Thomson. He wrote little during the last years of his life, abandoning himself more and more to constitutional languor. However, in the last year of his life, he woke up so far as to finish his noble poem *The Castle of Indolence*, and to compose yet another tragedy, *Coriolanus*. In the summer of 1748 Thomson caught a severe cold by taking a boat from Hammersmith to Kew when very hot; he was throwing this off, when he had the imprudence to sit in his garden while the dew was falling, and suffered a relapse. Symptoms of malignant fever declared themselves, and he sank rapidly, dying on the 27th of August. Thomson was universally beloved and bitterly regretted, for he possessed in a high degree the genius of friendship. He was "more fat than bard beseems," short, chubby, sleepy; but among his choice associates he would wake up, and be singularly communicative and entertaining. He was never married; he would have asked Miss Young of Gulyhill, the "Amanda" of his poems, to be his wife, but he never dared to do so on account of his poverty. We have mentioned one cause of the displeasure of Lady Hertford; another is more picturesque. Thomson is said to have irritated her ladyship by sitting under her fruit trees at Marlborough with his hands in his pockets, lazily biting pieces out of her ripe apricots.

Damon and Musidora

Engraved by Bartolozzi after a Picture by John Opie illustrating Thomson's "Summer"

FROM "SUMMER."

As from the face of heaven the shattered clouds
Tumultuous rove, the interminable sky
Sublimer swells, and o'er the world expands
A purer azure. Nature, from the storm,
Shines out afresh; and through the lightened air
A higher lustre and a clearer calm,
Diffusive, tremble; while, as if in sign
Of danger past, a glittering robe of joy,
Set off abundant by the yellow ray,
Invests the fields, yet dropping from distress.

'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
Joined to the low of kine, and numerous bleat
Of flocks thick nibbling through the clovered vale.
And shall the hymn be marred by thankless man,
Most favoured; who, with voice articulate
Should lead the chorus of this lower world?
Shall he, so soon forgetful of the hand
That hushed the thunder, and serenes the sky,
Extinguished feel that spark the tempest waked,
That sense of powers exceeding far his own,
Ere yet his feeble heart has lost its fears?

Cheered by the milder beam, the sprightly youth
Speeds to the well-known pool, whose crystal depth
A sandy bottom shows. Awhile he stands
Gazing the inverted landscape, half afraid
To meditate the blue profound below;
Then plunges headlong down the circling flood.
His ebon tresses and his rosy cheek
Instant emerge; and through the obedient wave,
At each short breathing by his lip repelled,
With arms and legs according well, he makes,
As humour leads, an easy-winding path;
While, from his polished sides, a dewy light
Effuses on the pleased spectators round.

FROM "AUTUMN."

Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare!
Scared from the corn, and now to some lone seat
Retired: the rushy fen; the ragged furze,
Stretched o'er the stony heath; the stubble chapped;
The thistly lawn; the thick-entangled broom;
Of the same friendly hue, the withered fern;
The fallow ground laid open to the sun,
Concoctive; and the nodding sandy bank,
Hung o'er the mazes of the mountain brook.
Vain is her best precaution; though she sits
Concealed, with folded ears, unsleeping eyes,
By Nature raised to take the horizon in,
And head couched close betwixt her hairy feet,
In act to spring away, The scented dew
Betrays her early labyrinth; and deep,
In scattered sullen openings, far behind,
With every breeze she hears the coming storm.

But nearer, and more frequent, as it loads
The sighing gale, she springs amazed, and all
The savage soul of game is up at once:
The pack full-opening, various: the shrill horn,
Resounded from the hills; the neighing steed,
Wild for the chase; and the loud hunter's shout;
O'er a weak, harmless, flying creature, all
Mixed in mad tumult and discordant cry.

From "The Castle of Indolence."

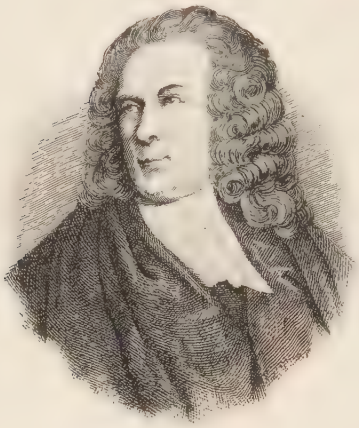
Joined to the prattle of the purling rills
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale;
And, now and then, sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;
Yet all these sounds y-blent inclinèd all to sleep.

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood;
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to move,
As Idles fancied in her dreaming mood;
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, ay waving to and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out, below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow.

A pleasing land of drowsihed it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
For ever flashing round a summer sky;
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness in the breast,
And the calm pleasures always hovered nigh;
But whate'er smacked of 'noyance or unrest,
Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest.

Another powerful innovator was Edward Young, but his influence was not so pure as that of Thomson. The author of *Night Thoughts* was an artist of a force approaching that of genius, but his error was to build that upon rhetoric which he should have based on imagination. The history of Young is one of the most curious in the chronicles of literature. Born far back in the seventeenth century, before Pope or Gay, he wrote in the manner of the Anne wits, without special distinction, through all the years of his youth and middle life. At the age of sixty he collected his poetical works, and appeared to be a finished mediocrity. It was not until then, and after that time, that, taking advantage of a strange wind of funereal enthusiasm that swept over him, he composed the masterpiece by which the next generation knew him, his amazingly popular and often highly successful *Night Thoughts*. It was in the sonorous blank verse of this adroit poem that the vague æsthetic melan-

choly of the age found its most striking exposition. It was hardly completed before a prose rival and imitation, the *Meditations among the Tombs* of Hervey, deepened its effect and surpassed it in popularity, though never approaching it in real literary ability. These two books, so pompous, unctuous, and hollow—the one illuminated by passages of highly artistic execution, the other mere barren bombast—occupied the fancies of men for well-nigh one hundred years, surviving the great revival, and successfully competing with Wordsworth and Keats.

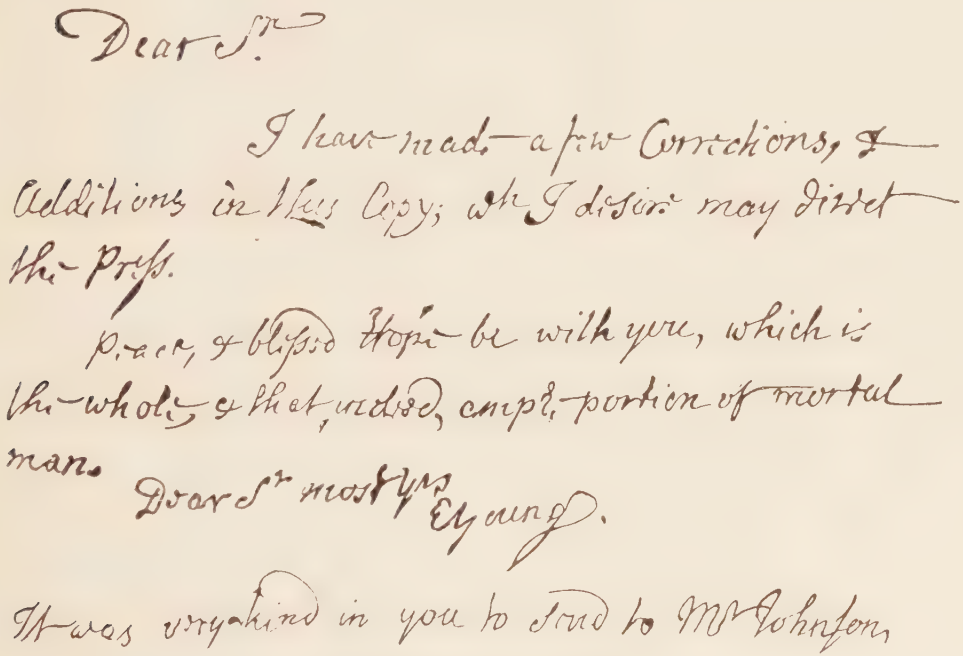


Edward Young
After the Portrait by Joseph Highmore

Edward Young (1683–1765) was the son of the rector of Upham in Hampshire, where he was born in June 1683; the father ultimately became Dean of Salisbury. Extremely little has been preserved about the youth and even the early middle life of this poet. He was educated at Winchester School, and went to Oxford in 1702. He seems to have shown no promise of distinction; at college he was "a foolish youth, the sport of peers and poets." He was elected, however, a law fellow of All Souls' in 1708, and continued to reside at the University. When past the age of thirty he began to publish, but his earliest essays showed little talent. His peculiar forcible gloom is displayed for the first time in *The Last Day*, a really fine thing, part of which was printed in the *Guardian* in 1713. Young seems to have looked to Queen Anne, who was his godmother, for patronage, and at her death he disappears. It has been conjectured that he went to Ireland. In 1719 he put on the stage his tragedy of *Busiris*, and in 1721 *The Revenge;* the latter enjoyed a substantial success, and Young, now forty years of age, became a personage at last. At this time, and for some years to come, he was enjoying the patronage of the Duke of Wharton. From 1725 to 1728 Young was engaged in publishing, in six instalments, his satires, which were afterwards united under

Edward Young's House at Welwyn

the title of *The Universal Passion.* When George II. came to the throne, Young, who had failed to enter Parliament for Cirencester, determined, although he was forty-seven years of age, to take holy orders; he was almost immediately appointed chaplain to the King. He is said to have asked Pope how he should conduct his theological studies, and to have been answered according to his folly with a recommendation to master St. Thomas Aquinas. A begging letter to Mrs. Howard, the King's mistress, exists to prove that Young equally needed advice in the arts of obtaining Church preferment; he was importunate, yet he got little. In 1730 he was glad to take Welwyn, a college living; and the next year he married a widow of quality, Lady Elizabeth Leigh. The poetry Young published during these years was beneath contempt, yet he



Dear Sr.

I have mad a few Corrections, & Additions in this Copy; wh I desire may direct the Prss.

Peace, & blessd Hope be with you, which is the whole, & that, indeed, compt portion of mortal man. Dear Sr most yrs Eyoung.

It was very kind in you to send to Mr Johnson,

Autograph Note of Young's

was already meditating upon the outlines of his great and enduring work. When close upon the mature age of sixty, with no production behind him which could really encourage him to confidence in his gifts, Young began the composition of the very elaborate poem which placed him in the first rank of contemporary writers. *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts,* appeared from 1742 to 1744, and greatly impressed the age with its moral sublimity. Young, however, was unable to repeat his success: he published several other works in prose and verse, but none of them rose above his earlier level of fustian and flatness He considered himself to be cruelly neglected, and applied to the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury for preferment; Secker's reply is a monument of irony. The solitary success which attended his efforts was almost sarcastically inadequate; when he was nearly eighty he was appointed Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager. Young lived on at Welwyn until he had nearly completed his eighty-second year, preserving his intellect to the last; he died on the 5th of April 1765, and was buried at Welwyn. The character of Young presents us with some

very curious features. He was the typical eighteenth-century adventurer of letters, truculent and yet obsequious, without a trace of self-respect in the presence of the great, but arrogant and presuming with his own class. Yet Young was not without certain stately virtues; he could be penetrating, dignified, and extremely polite. That he was the victim of affectation, seems proved by the story that he wrote at night by

THE

COMPLAINT:

OR,

Night-Thoughts

ON

LIFE, DEATH, & IMMORTALITY.

Sunt lacrymæ rerum, & mentem mortalia tangunt VIRG

LONDON:

Printed for R. DODSLEY, at TULLY's Head in *Pall-Mall.* 1742.

[Price, One Shilling.]

Title-page of First Edition of "Night Thoughts"

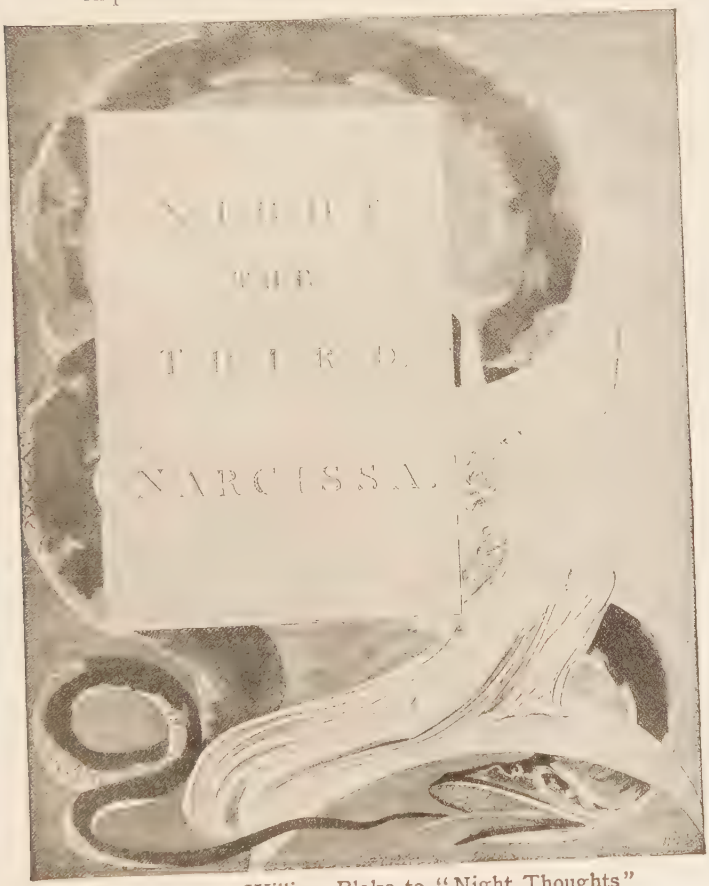
the glimmer of a candle stuck in a human skull. His friendship with Voltaire did credit to the intellect of both of them, and Young's extempore epigram on the appearance of the great Frenchman deserves an immortality of quotation:—

"You are so witty, profligate and thin,
At once we think you Milton, Death and Sin."

FROM "NIGHT THOUGHTS I."

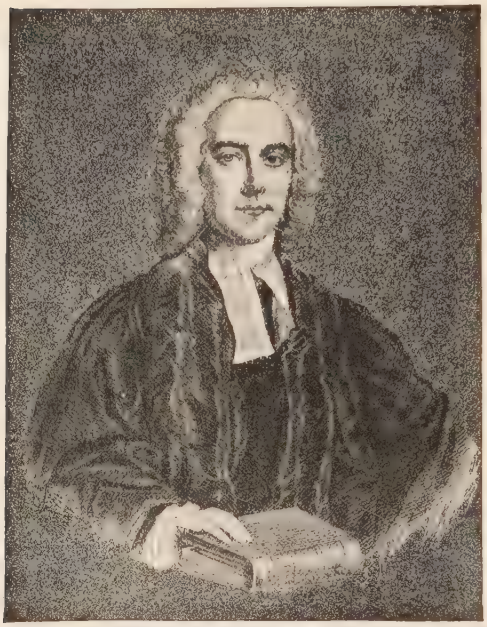
O ye blest scenes of permanent delight!
Full above measure! lasting, beyond bound!
A perpetuity of bliss is bliss.
Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an end,
That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy,
And quite unparadise the realms of light.
Safe are you lodged above these rolling spheres,
The baneful influence of whose giddy dance
Sheds sad vicissitude on all beneath.
Here teems with revolutions every hour;
And rarely for the better; or the best,
More mortal than the common births of fate.

Each moment has its sickle, emulous
Of time's enormous scythe, whose ample sweep
Strikes empires from the root ; each moment plays
His little weapon in the narrower sphere
Of sweet domestic comfort, and cuts down
The fairest bloom of sublunary bliss.
Bliss ! sublunary bliss !—proud words and vain !
Implicit treason to divine decree !



Title-page by William Blake to "Night Thoughts"

A bold invasion of the rights of heaven !
I clasp'd the phantoms, and I found them air.
O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace !
What darts of agony had miss'd my heart !
Death ! great proprietor of all ! 'tis thine
To tread out empire, and to quench the stars.
The sun himself by thy permission shines ;
And, one day, thou shalt pluck him from his sphere.
Amid such mighty plunder, why exhaust
Thy partial quiver on a mark so mean ?
Why thy peculiar rancour wreak'd on me ?
Insatiate archer ! could not one suffice ?
Thy shaft flew thrice ; and thrice my peace was slain ;
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.



James Hervey
From an Engraving by S. Freeman

James Hervey (1714–1758) was appointed in 1740 curate of Bideford in North Devon. While he was there, he walked over to the churchyard of Kilkhampton, and on his return began to write his famous *Meditations among the Tombs*, which were published in 1746–47, and went through twenty-five editions. Hervey was a gentle, pious, and placable man, who died prematurely of a consumption, being at the time rector of Weston Favell in Northamptonshire. His *Theron and Aspasio* (1752) was at one time even more famous than the *Meditations* in evangelical circles.

Robert Blair (1699–1746) was the minister of Athelstaneford in Haddingtonshire from 1731 to his death. Very little is known about his life, nor does it possess any further interest for us than that in 1743 he published his strangely powerful poem in blank verse, entitled *The Grave*.

From Blair's "Grave."

What is this world?
What but a spacious burial-field unwalled,
Strewed with death's spoils, the spoils of animals
Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones.
The very turf on which we tread once lived,
And we that live must lend our carcases
To cover our own offspring; in their turns
They too must cover theirs—'tis here all meet,
The shivering Icelander and sunburnt Moor,
Men of all climes who never met before,
And of all creeds, the Jew, the Turk, the Christian.
Here the proud prince, the favourite yet prouder,

Illustration by William Blake to Blair's "Grave"

His sovereign's keeper, and the people's scourge,
Are huddled out of sight.—Here lie abashed
The great negotiators of the earth,
And celebrated masters of the balance,
Deep read in stratagems and wiles of courts;
Now vain their treaty skill.—Death scorns to treat.
Here the o'erloaded slave flings down his burden
From his galled shoulders, and when the stern tyrant,
With all his guards and tools of power about him
Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,
Mocks his short arm, and quick as thought escapes
Where tyrants vex not, and the weary rest.

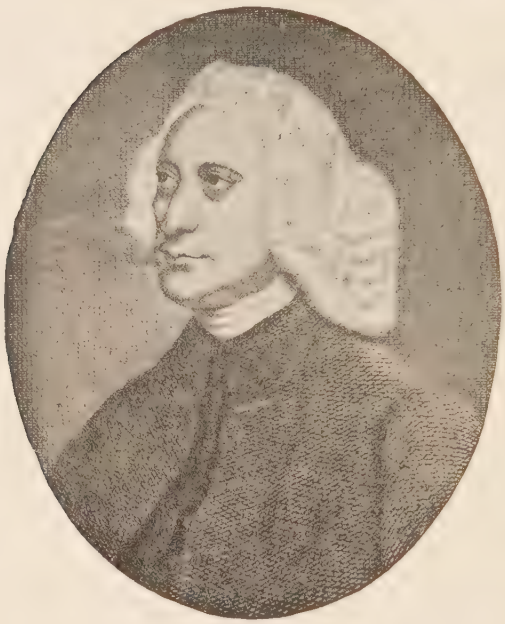
This sepulchral rhetoric in Miltonic verse, whether embodied in Young's rolling iambics or compressed into the homelier vigour of Blair's *Grave*, or tricked out in pseudo-classical turgidity by the disciples of Thomson, was what passed for poetry *par excellence* one hundred and fifty years ago.

The influence of Thomson was strong on Dyer and Armstrong. **John Dyer** (1698?–1758) was the son of a solicitor at Aberglasslyn, Carmarthenshire. He took to water-colour painting as a profession, studying under Jonathan Richardson, and wandering about in South Wales sketching ruins and landscapes. It was on one of these excursions that he wrote his poem of *Grongar Hill*, published in a miscellany in 1726, which contained studies of Nature which were novel and which were admired even to excess. Dyer went to Italy, and on his return he published a blank verse poem, *The Ruins of Rome*, 1740. He now entered the Church, and held successive livings in the counties of Leicester and Lincoln. In 1757 he published a long didactic poem on the care of sheep, entitled *The Fleece;* this was a failure, and Dyer was told he would be "buried in woollen." He died of consumption, at Coningsby in Hants, where he had lately fitted up a house, on the 24th of July 1758. The best part of *Grongar Hill*, which is a description of the Vale of Towy as seen from that eminence, is the following, which certainly deserves a place in a record of the advance of a sentiment for Nature in English literature:—

John Dyer

Old castles on the cliff arise,
Proudly towering in the skies!
Rushing from the woods, the spires
Seem from hence ascending fires!
Half his beams Apollo sheds
On the yellow mountain-heads!
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,
And glitters on the broken rocks. . . .
Gaudy as the opening dawn,
Lies a long and level lawn.
On which a dark hill, steep and high,
Holds and charms the wandering eye!
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,
His sides are clothed with waving wood.

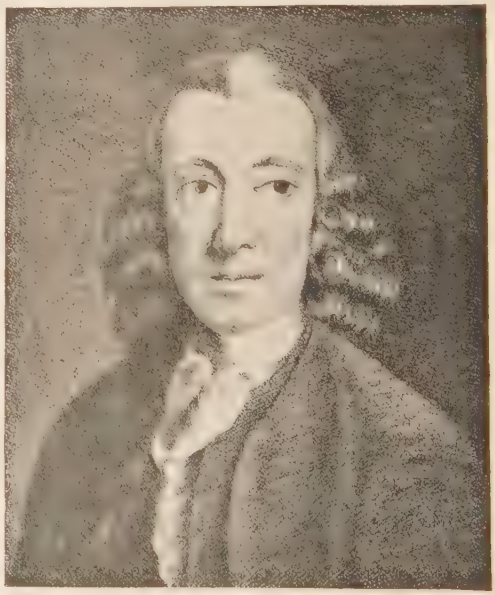
John Armstrong (1709–1779) was a close disciple of Thomson, whom he followed in his errors as well as in his beauties. He published much, but is remembered best by his didactic poem on *The Art of Preserving Health*, 1744. Armstrong became a physician in 1732, and practised in Germany and afterwards in London.



John Armstrong
After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Henry Brooke (1703–1783), long afterwards famous for the novel of *The Fool of Quality*, published in 1735, in six anonymous folio instalments, the very remarkable philosophical poem called *Universal Beauty*, inspired by the system of Shaftesbury. To this neglected work have been traced back the earliest rudiments of the theory of physical evolution.

With the prevailing taste in poetry the style in grottoes, urns, and tombs closely corresponded, and to this much of the superficial character of what was most enjoyed in Gray, Collins, and even Goldsmith, may be traced. The great gift of the first two of this trio was the renewed elaboration of their verse-form. Thomson had revived the beautiful Spenserian measure; in the *Odes* of THOMAS GRAY and of WILLIAM COLLINS a variety of stanzaic forms illustrated a return to pre-Drydenic variety and ease of prosody. To a world that scarcely appreciated the meaning of verse which was not either a succession of five-beat couplets or a mass of stiff blank verse, Gray introduced choral measures, richly and elaborately rhymed, full of complicated triumphal melody; Collins, at the same moment, in a lower key, whispering rather than shouting, fashioned his delicate, cold, aerial music. Unhappily, in the middle of the eighteenth century everything conspired to drag the pioneers



Henry Brooke
From an Original Portrait

of free art back to the bondage of rhetoric, and the work of Gray and Collins was instantly retarded and parodied by the frosty talent of Akenside, in whose hands the newly found lyrical fire was turned to ice. The impact of Gray on Europe was delayed, but could not be suppressed. The *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* is the direct precursor, not only of Chateaubriand, but of Lamartine, and is the most characteristic single poem of the eighteenth century.

Thomas Gray
After the Portrait by J. G. Eccardt

Thomas Gray (1716–1771) was the son of Philip Gray, a scrivener, and his wife Dorothy Antrobus; he was born in Cornhill on the 26th of December 1716. He was the only one of his parents' twelve children who survived infancy, and he was only saved by the desperate courage of his mother, who, when he was attacked by a convulsion, opened a vein with her scissors. Philip Gray was of a jealous and tyrannical disposition, and although he was well-to-do, he would contribute nothing to the support of his wife or child. The former kept a milliner's shop, and the latter was taken by a maternal uncle to his own house at Burnham, and in 1727 sent, at his mother's expense, to Eton. He made friends with Horace Walpole and Richard West. In 1734 he was removed to Cambridge, where he was entered as a pensioner first at Pembroke Hall and then at Peterhouse; from 1735 to 1738 he had the company of Horace Walpole at Cambridge, and he was already beginning to write verse, mostly in Latin. He was very unhappy, however, at the University, which he calls "that pretty collection of desolate animals," and he revolted against the deadness of the curriculum. In September 1738 he left Cambridge, and six months later he started

Silhouette of Gray
"Done in 1763 by Mr. Mapletoft"

in company with Horace Walpole for a three years' tour on the Continent. The friends went first of all to Paris, where they stayed two months, and saw a good deal of fashionable and of literary society. They then settled for three months at Rheims, where they enjoyed very cordial hospitality. In the autumn of 1739 they were sauntering through France; they loitered a while in Geneva, and then,

Illustration to Gray's "Elegy"
Drawn by R. Bentley for the Edition of 1753

ELEGY

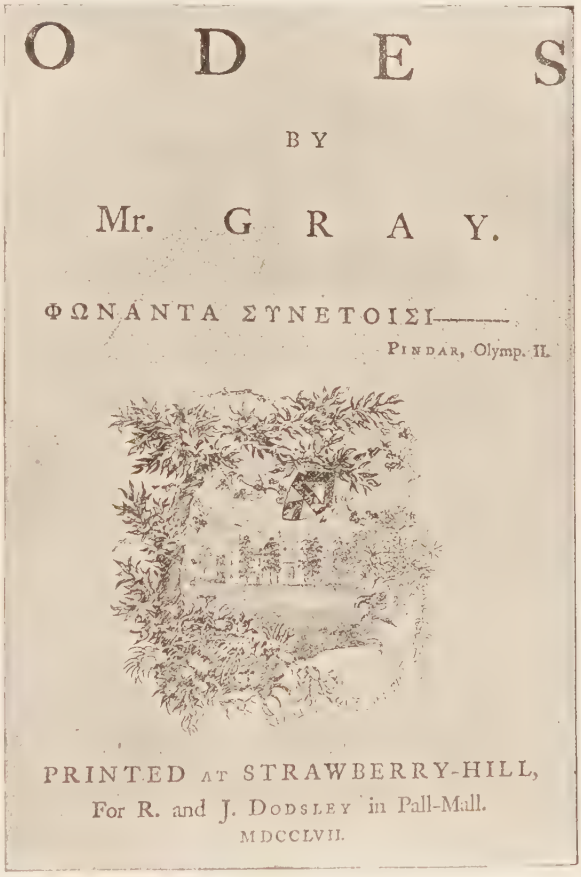
Written in a Country Church Yard.

HE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind flowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkneſs and to me.

Now

protected by "muffs, hoods, and masks of beaver, fur boots and bearskins," they ventured over the Alps in November. This adventure deeply impressed the imagination of Gray; "not a precipice," he said, "not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry." All through 1740 the friends were together in Italy, but in the following May, while at Reggio, they quarrelled, and Gray returned alone to England. In November 1741 his father died, and was found to have

squandered the greater part of his fortune. Gray spent the winter of this year in London with West, and he now began to write English poetry; of his early tragedy of *Agrippina* only a fragment survives. In June 1742 West died, and Gray went down to Stoke Pogis, where one of his uncles had a house. Here he wrote his *Ode to Spring*, the *Eton Ode*, the *Hymn to Adversity*, and began the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. His uncle now died, and Gray's mother joined her two sisters in the house at Stoke Pogis, which now became Gray's occasional home until his death. He had given up the study of the law, and now, for cheapness' sake, he resolved to reside in Cambridge. In the winter of 1742 he proceeded to Peterhouse, and there for two years is lost to sight. In 1744 the difference between Gray and Walpole was made up, and the former began to correspond again with the latter and with other old acquaintances; in 1746 Walpole took a house in Windsor, so that, when Gray was at Stoke, the friends could spend one day of every week together. In 1747 Gray printed, in folio, his *Eton Ode*, and wrote the ode to Walpole's cat. On his thirtieth birthday he described himself as "lazy and listless, and old, and vexed, and perplexed"; but he was cheered up by the enthusiasm of a new friend, William Mason, afterwards his biographer, "a well-meaning creature." His favourite aunt, Miss Mary Antrobus, died in November 1749, and her funeral seems to have led Gray to finish the *Elegy* which he had sketched seven years earlier. This famous poem was published by Dodsley in quarto in February 1751, and was greatly successful from the very first. In 1753 Gray's poems were first collected, in folio, with plates by Richard Bentley; in March of that year his mother died; his exquisite epitaph may still be read on her tombstone at Stoke Pogis. In 1754 he completed, in his slow way, *The Progress of Poesy*, and, in 1757, *The Bard;* these were published together, as *Odes by Mr. Gray*, in the latter year. In 1756 a cruel practical joke was played on the poet by some coarse undergraduates, who raised a cry of fire, and induced him to descend in his night-gown into a tub of water. Failing to obtain redress from the college authorities, he transferred himself from Peterhouse, where he had no intimates, to Pembroke, which was full of his friends. He was welcomed, and he made this college his


ODES

BY

Mr. GRAY.

ΦΩΝΑΝΤΑ ΣΥΝΕΤΟΙΣΙ——

PINDAR, Olymp. II.

PRINTED AT STRAWBERRY-HILL,
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Title-page of Gray's "Odes"

Cambridge home for the rest of his life. He was now able to live in greater comfort, since, the ladies whom he had supported being dead, he sank part of his little property in an annuity. Moreover, in 1759 he took a house in Bloomsbury, and was practically absent from Cambridge for three years, mainly engaged in studying early English and Icelandic poetry at the recently-opened British Museum. The final years of Gray's life were extremely uneventful; they were mainly spent, in great retirement and constantly declining health, in Cambridge, diversified by "Lilliputian travels" through portions of England and Scotland. In 1768 he collected the poems of his lifetime into one slender volume, and was appointed Professor of Modern Literature at Cambridge, but delivered no lectures. In 1769 he made his celebrated journey to the Cumbrian Lakes, and wrote the *Journal*, in which for the first time the sublimity of that scenery was properly celebrated. In the same year Gray formed the last, and one of the most ardent of his friendships, that with the brilliant young Swiss, Charles de Bonstetten. He hoped to follow his young companion to Switzerland, but lacked the strength, and on the 30th of July 1771 he died of suppressed gout in his rooms at Pembroke College, having been taken ill at dinner in hall six nights before. He was buried at Stoke Pogis. At the time of his death Gray was "perhaps the most learned man in Europe." He was a little plump person, very shy, with a fund of latent humour; the tottering and gingerly way in which he walked was the subject of ridicule, and he was altogether too delicate for the rough age he lived in. His admirable *Letters*, first published in 1775, revealed sides of his character previously unsuspected, and greatly to his honour.

Stoke Pogis Church, showing the Tomb of Gray

FROM THE "ETON ODE."

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the watery glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Henry's holy shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way:

Elegy, written in a Country Churchyard

The Curfew tolls the Knell of parting Day,
The lowing Herd wind slowly o'er the Lea,
The Ploughman homeward plods his weary Way,
And leaves the World to Darkness & to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring Landscape on the Sight,
And all the Air a solemn Stillness holds,
Save where the Beetle wheels his droning Flight,
Or drowsy Tinklings lull the distant Folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled Tower
The moping Owl does to the Moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret Bower
Molest her ancient solitary Reign.

Beneath those rugged Elms, that Yew-tree's Shade,
Where heaves the Turf in many a mould'ring Heap,
Each in his narrow Cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the Hamlet sleep.

The breezy Call of incense-breathing Morn,
The Swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built Shed,
The Cock's shrill Clarion, & the echoing Horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly Bed.

For them no more the blazing Hearth shall burn,
Or busy Housewife ply her Evening Care:
No Children run to lisp their Sire's Return,
Nor climb his Knees the envied Kiss to share.

Oft did the Harvest to their Sickles yield,
Their Furrow oft the stubborn Glebe has broke,
How jocund did they drive their Team a-field!
How bow'd the Woods beneath their sturdy Stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful Toil,
Their homely Joys, & Destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful Smile
The short & simple Annals of the Poor.

The Boast of Heraldry, the Pomp of Power,
And all that Beauty, all that Wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th'inevitable Hour.
The Paths of Glory lead but to the Grave

Forgive, ye Proud, th'involuntary Fault,
If Memory to These no Trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn Isle & fretted Vault
The pealing Anthem swells the Note of Praise.

Can storied Urn or animated Bust
Back to its Mansion call the fleeting Breath?
Can Honour's Voice provoke the silent Dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold Ear of Death?

Page of MS. of Gray's "Elegy"

Ah, happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!
Ah, fields beloved in vain!
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

View of Eton Chapel

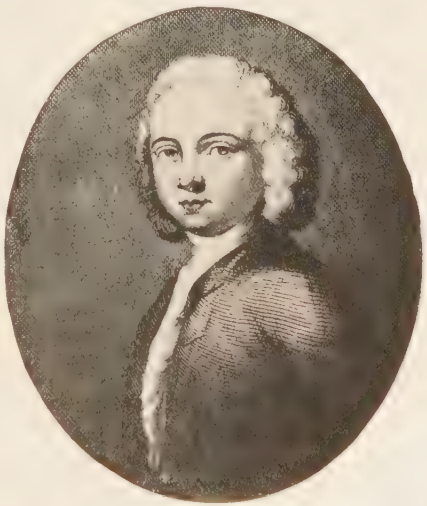
From Bentley's Illustrations to Gray's "Six Poems" of 1753

FROM "THE PROGRESS OF POESY."

In climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The Muse has broke the twilight gloom
To cheer the shivering natives' dull abode.
And oft, beneath the odorous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,
In loose numbers wildly sweet,
Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.
Her track, where'er the goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
The unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves
In lingering labyrinths creep,
How do your tuneful echoes languish,
Mute, but to the voice of anguish!
Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around;
Every shade and hallowed fountain
Murmured deep a solemn sound:
Till the sad Nile, in Greece's evil hour,
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

William Collins (1721–1759) was the son of a prosperous hatter in Chichester, where he was born on Christmas Day 1721. According to an early tradition, he attended the Prebendal School in Chichester. In 1733 he was sent to Winchester, as a scholar on the foundation, and remained there seven years. There was a great deal of poetical enthusiasm in the school during this period, and Collins began to write verses at twelve. His *Persian Eclogues* are said by Warton to have been written when Collins was seventeen, that is to say, in 1738; they appeared anonymously in 1742. But meanwhile, and before the boy left Winchester, some of his verses had been printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Collins was head of the school in 1740, and, after matriculating at Queen's College, Oxford, went to Magdalen College as a demy in 1741. At the University he was "distinguished for genius and indolence"; he is understood to have left Oxford, rather abruptly, early in 1744. He went over to Flanders to be a soldier, but was told that he was "too indolent even for the army." He returned to London, and intended to enter upon holy orders, but was dissuaded from doing so by a wealthy tobacconist. It is plain that he was not fitted to devote himself to the labour involved by the adoption of any profession. He sold his property in Sussex, and "subsisted on the proceeds" in the leading coffee-houses of London until all his little fortune was dissipated. Dr. Johnson, who now made his acquaintance and liked him, said that "Collins had many projects in his head." None of them came to anything, and it is probable that the poet's irresolution was already the consequence of mental disease. His *Odes*, a slender volume containing the most splendid of his productions, appeared in the winter of 1746–47. It was not bought, and Collins, in a fit of anger, burned the



William Collins
From an Original Drawing

remaining copies. After the death of Thomson, Collins published, in June 1748, a singularly beautiful monody on that event. In 1749, after having wasted all his substance, and tasted the bitterness of poverty, Collins inherited from an uncle a sum of money "which," as Johnson says, "he could hardly think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust." He withdrew to Chichester, where he wrote, in 1750, his *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands*, which was posthumously printed in 1788. He also wrote an *Ode on the Music of the Grecian Theatre*, which has unhappily been lost. He now settled down to write a *History of the Revival of Learning*, but the malady which had long threatened him now definitely attacked him. Terrified by the overshadowing of his intellect, Collins closed his books and tried to forget his anxieties by travelling in France. Nothing, however, stayed the progress of

Chichester Cathedral in the Eighteenth Century

the disease. His symptoms were originally those, not so much of madness, as of "general laxity and feebleness," but during a visit to Oxford in 1754 the malady took a gloomier character. For the next five years he lingered at Chichester, under the care of his sister, hopelessly insane, but with glimmerings of sanity, since in 1756 he corrected his early eclogues for republication in the following year. Towards the last, however, his condition became terrible, and he filled the cloisters of the cathedral with his shrieks and moanings. He died at Chichester on the 12th of June 1759. Gilbert White, who knew him at college, says that Collins was "of a light and clear complexion, with grey eyes, so very weak at times as hardly to bear a candle in the room." According to Johnson, "his morals were pure and his opinions pious." A few friends were much attached to him; but it is evident from all tradition that the beautiful light of the genius of Collins burned within a very feeble and inefficient physical framework.

Collins' "Ode to Evening."

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales.

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale
May, not unseemly, with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant hours, and elves
Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brow with sedge
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires;
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest eve!
While summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall fancy, friendship, science, rose-lipped health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favourite name!

Mark Akenside (1721–1770) was the son of a butcher at Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he was born on the 9th of November 1721. In his infancy his father's cleaver fell upon his foot, producing a lifelong lameness, of which he had afterwards the weakness to be ashamed, as a sign of his low birth. He showed an early precocity, and his *Virtuoso* (written in 1737) was the earliest poem in which the stanza of Spenser was revived. All Akenside's poetic work of merit belongs to his youth; his *Pleasures of Imagination* were published in 1744; his *Odes* in 1745. By the age of five-and-twenty he was practically dead as a poet; but he lived long afterwards as a highly successful doctor of medicine. From 1759 onwards he was principal physician to Christ's Hospital, and enjoyed all the honours of the medical profession until his rather sudden death from fever on the 23rd of June 1770. Akenside was a very arrogant man, pompous, and devoid of all sense of humour; "he looked as if he could never be undressed." He wore a large white wig and carried a long sword; he terrified the patients at the hospital by the severity of his "pale, strumous countenance." He was accused of ordering the out-patients to be swept from before him with brooms by the hospital servants. He was, however, a learned and "sagacious" lecturer, and he preserved both in poetry and science a dignified austerity.

Mark Akenside
After the Portrait by A. Pond

AKENSIDE'S "ODE ON A SERMON AGAINST GLORY" (1747).

Come then, tell me, sage divine,
Is it an offence to own
That our bosoms e'er incline
Toward immortal Glory's throne?
For with me nor pomp nor pleasure,
Bourbon's might, Braganza's treasure,
So can Fancy's dream rejoice,
So conciliate Reason's choice,
As one approving word of her impartial voice.

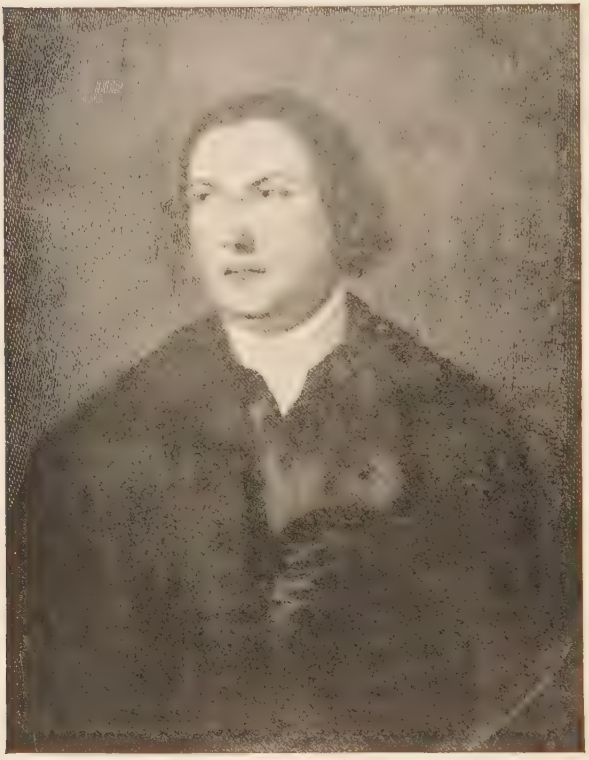
If to spurn at noble praise
Be the passport to thy heaven,
Follow thou those gloomy ways;
No such law to me was given:
Nor, I trust, shall I deplore me,
Faring like my friends before me;
Nor an holier place desire
Than Timoleon's arms acquire,
And Tully's curule chair, and Milton's golden lyre.

Christ's Hospital in the Eighteenth Century

From 1740 to 1760 the Thomsonian and the Graian influences were predominant. About the latter date there was a relapse into something of the old Jesuit precision. In CHURCHILL and his companions, regardless of the more solemn and Latin satire which Johnson had been cultivating, a return was made to the lighter and more primitive forms which Pope had used. For a moment the sombre romantic school seemed swept out of existence, but the popularity of the savage couplets of Churchill was brief. All that was left of the reaction was soon seen in the modified classicism of Goldsmith, with its didactic couplets as smooth and as lucid as Pope's, its humanity and grace, its simplicity and picturesque sweetness. In the *Deserted Village* (1770) we have the old kind of starched poetry at its very best, and at its latest, since after Goldsmith the movement which had begun with Pope ceased to possess any real vitality.

Charles Churchill (1731–1764) was the son of a curate in Westminster, where he was born in February 1731. He was a riotous boy, and a youth who failed at both universities. At the age of seventeen he made a reckless marriage, in 1753 he became

a curate in Somersetshire, and was ordained in 1756. He came up to London in 1758, and his life became a tissue of rowdy irregularities. In 1761 he published anonymously the first of his poems, *The Rosciad*, a satire on the actors of his time. This enjoying an amazing success, Churchill flung his cassock to the winds, and adopted verse-writing as a profession. During the next three years he published an incredible number of violent personal satires, most of which were highly successful, since people "liked to see the bludgeon's dint, when Churchill wrote." He threw himself with vehemence into the cause of Wilkes, whom he followed to Boulogne-sur-Mer in October 1764. Here he caught a fever, and died on the 4th of November. In the hour of Churchill's highest popularity Johnson saw through him, and said that he was a tree that would never produce good fruit, but only crabs. The image admirably suits the profuse, tart, and peevish verse of Churchill.



Charles Churchill
After the Portrait by J. S. C. Schaak

The close of this central period of the eighteenth century was stilted and inefficient in poetry. The rigidity of the classical system, now outworn after the exercise of one hundred years and more, strangled thought and expression, and forced those who desired to write to use mere centos of earlier and freer masters. The elegiac school had lasted but a very few years; its successes are dated almost exclusively between 1742 and 1760. The new poetic feeling, however, never fell into complete desuetude, for at the very moment when Gray and Young were becoming silent, several new forces asserted themselves, all moving in the direction of reform in taste. Of these the earliest was the revelation, between 1760 and 1763, of the mysterious paraphrases of Ossian; in 1765 Bishop Percy issued his *Reliques* of primitive English poetry; in 1770 the untimely death of CHATTERTON revealed an extraordinary genius of a novel kind; and from 1777 onwards Thomas Warton, in his *History of English Poetry*, was recalling readers to masterpieces of art and passion that were not bound down to the rules nor

dwarfed by the classical tradition. Of all these elements the least genuine was undoubtedly the first mentioned, but it is equally certain that it was the strongest. The vogue of OSSIAN through all Europe became immense; no real British writer, not Shakespeare himself, enjoyed the respect of Europe so universally as the shadowy Ossian did at the close of the eighteenth century. Critics of high position gravely discussed the relative magnitude of Homer and of the author of *Fingal*, and by no means invariably gave the crown to the Greek. The key to the extraordinary success of these Caledonian forgeries is, that they boldly offered to release the spirit of Europe from its pedagogic bondage. No one, not even Goethe, was anxious to inquire too closely concerning the authority of fragments which professed to come to us from an extreme antiquity, tinged with moonlight and melancholy, exempt from all attention to the strained rules and laws of composition, dimly primitive and pathetically vague, full of all kinds of plaintive and lyrical suggestiveness. When Napoleon in 1804 desired to give the highest possible praise to a new, modern, brilliantly emancipated, literary production, he could find no better epithet for it than "vraiment Ossianique." And this suggests in what light we have to regard MacPherson's forgeries, so irritating to our cultivated taste in their bombastic pretentiousness. It was not what they were that fascinated Europe, it was what they suggested, and the product is what we read in Goethe, Byron, Chateaubriand.

FROM GOLDSMITH'S "DESERTED VILLAGE."

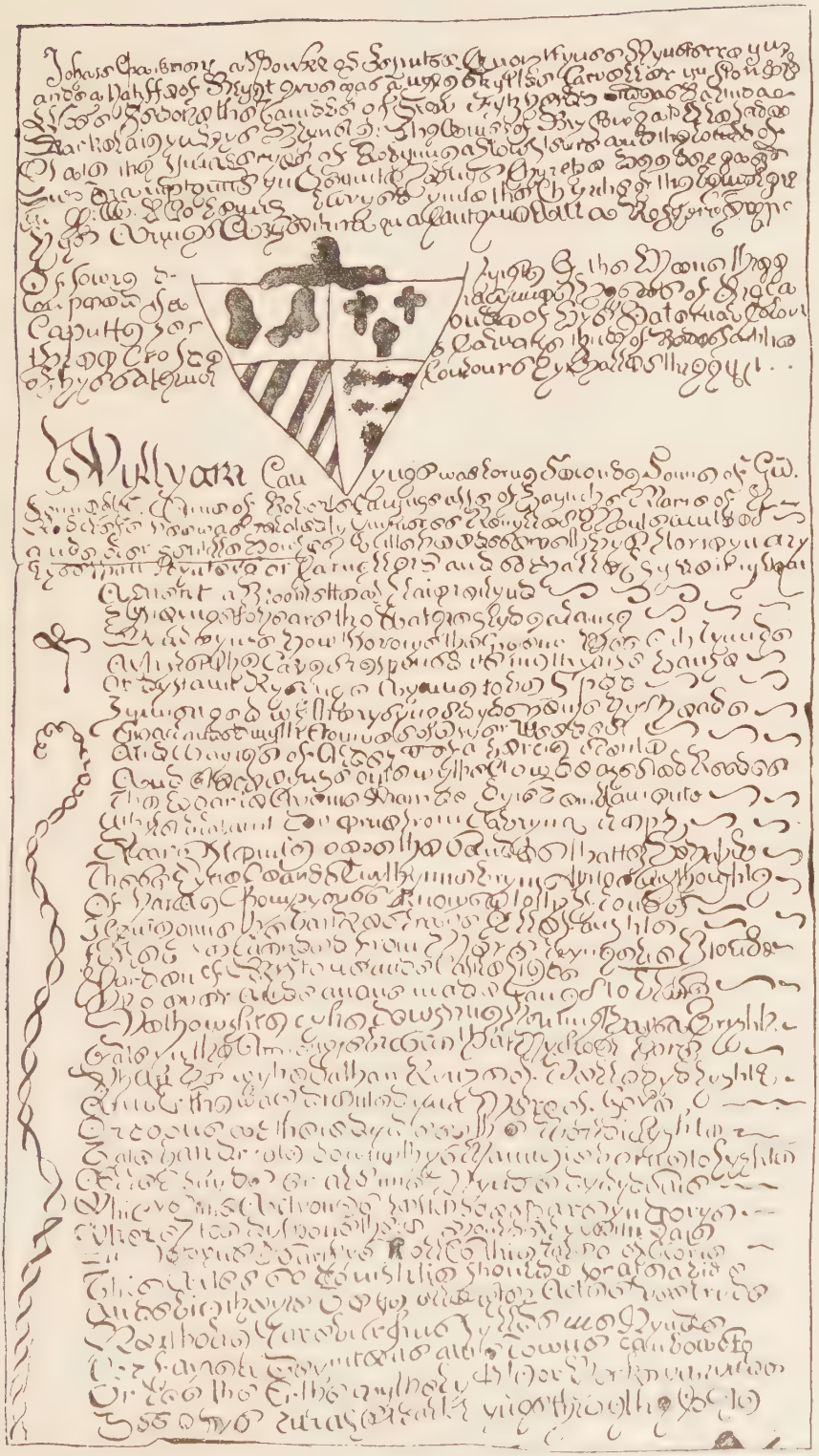
Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watchdog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;
There all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.

But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770) was the posthumous son of a writing-master and "sub-chaunter" in Bristol, where he was born, in extremely indigent circumstances, on the 20th of November 1752. His mother kept a small dame's school, close to the church of St. Mary Redcliffe. Curiously enough, although Chatterton was to become the very type of precocious maturity, while a little child he was dull and backward; he could scarcely be taught his letters, and "a fear was aroused that he was deficient in intellect." At the age of eight a sudden change took place, and he began to read from morning to night; in this year, 1760, he became a scholar at Colston's Hospital, the Blue-Coat School of Bristol. Here Chatterton remained for seven years, forming few friendships, living apart from the other boys, and cultivating in the great church of St. Mary—"that wonder of mansions," as he called it—a passion for all the neglected arts of the Middle Ages. In his mother's house were various mediæval parchments without value, which had been stolen from the church, and others were left carelessly within his reach. It is not known exactly at what date he began to hoard these documents, to puzzle over their writing, and then to imitate it. Quite in early boyhood, however, he had created a group of imaginary fifteenth-century figures, clustered around a Thomas Rowley, priest and poet, and a William Canynge, merchant of Bristol. In illustration of the adventures of these dream-personages, Chatterton began to write prose and poetry in what he believed to be Early or Middle English. Extraordinary as it seems, there is no doubt that a great part of this complicated design had taken shape in his brain, without help or suggestion from a single associate, before Chatterton was eleven years of age. He was not twelve when he showed the MS. of his eclogue of *Elinour and Juga* to a friend. Not until 1767, however, did he begin to circulate his forgeries among adult persons, professing that he had found these writings in the muniment room of St. Mary Redcliffe. They were accepted by the antiquaries of Bristol with greedy credulity, and Chatterton continued to produce more and more "Rowley" papers. The best of these belong to the year 1768, when the poet was between fifteen and sixteen. He sent some copies, however, to Horace Walpole, who submitted them to Gray, and Gray instantly pronounced them forgeries. In 1769 the restless and unhappy boy formed the design of coming up to London to try his fortune as a journalist. He had been apprenticed in 1767 to an attorney, but he got his indentures cancelled, and in April 1770 he arrived in town. At first he obtained a little ill-paid work as a political writer, but the death of Beckford in June closed this source of revenue. He now produced a very lively burletta, *The Revenge*, for which he received five guineas, but these were soon exhausted. He found himself

Thomas Chatterton

From the authentic Portrait in Dix's "Life of Chatterton"



A page from the Rowley Forgeries

alone, face to face with starvation, and to end his intolerable miseries he drank arsenic on the night of the 24th of August 1770, being seventeen years and ten months of age, and the most extraordinary genius of his years whom the world has ever seen.

FROM CHATTERTON'S "ÆLLA."

First Minstrel.

The budding floweret blushes at the light:
The meads are sprinkled with the yellow hue,
In daisied mantles is the mountain dight;
The slim young cowslip bendeth with the dew;
The trees enleafèd into heaven straught,
When gentle winds do blow, to whistling din are brought

The evening comes and brings the dew along;
The ruddy welkin sheeneth to the eyne;
Around the ale-stake minstrels sing the song;
Young ivy round the doorpost doth entwine;
I lay me on the grass; yet to my will,
Albeit all is fair, there lacketh something still.

Second Minstrel.

So Adam thought, what time, in Paradise,
All heaven and earth did homage to his mind
In woman and none else man's pleasaunce lies,
As instruments of joy are kind with kind.
Go, take a wife unto thine arms, and see,
Winter and dusky hills will have a charm for thee

Third Minstrel.

When Autumn stript and sunburnt doth appear
With his gold hand gilding the fallen leaf,
Bringing up Winter to fulfil the year,
Bearing upon his back the ripened sheaf;
When all the hills with woody seed are white;
When levin-fires and gleams do meet from far the sight;—

When the fair apples, red as even-sky,
Do bend the tree unto the fruitful ground;
When juicy pears and berries of black dye
Do dance in air and call the eyes around;
Then, be it evening foul or evening fair,
Methinks my joy of heart is shadowed with some care.

There was no conscious rebellion against fashion in the sentimental **William Shenstone** (1714–1763), yet his artifice and graces were links in the transition of style. He is remembered for the fantastic little estate of Leasowes, in Salop, where he devoted the whole of his leisure in dreams of how best "to diversify his surface, to entangle his

walks, and to wind his waters." The smoothness and the sentimentality of the eighteenth century reach their acme in Shenstone, to whom his own words may be applied:—

William Shenstone
From an original Portrait

'Tis his with mock passion to glow,
'Tis his in smooth tales to unfold
How her face is as bright as the snow,
And her bosom, be sure, is as cold;

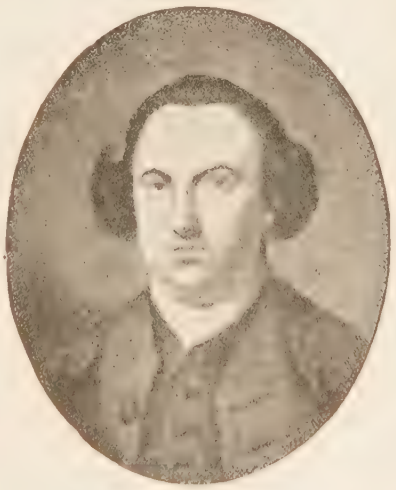
How the nightingales labour the strain,
With the notes of his charmer to vie;
How they vary their accents in vain,
Repine at her triumphs, and die.

Shenstone's most ambitious poem, *The Schoolmistress*, appeared in 1742; the *Pastoral Ballad* (from which two stanzas have just been quoted) in 1743. He died at the Leasowes, of a fever, on the 11th of February 1763. A figure of a totally different kind was **Christopher Smart** (1722–1770), in whose case the painful discipline of the age was loosened by nothing less than mental disease. He was born at Shipbourne on April 11, 1722, and at the age of seventeen became a scholar of Pembroke College. He was later a fellow, and held several college offices, but became increasingly unbearable, until, in 1751, he "set out for Bedlam." This was the earliest of many attacks of insanity, in the course of one of which (about 1762) Johnson visited him and prayed with him. It was in the asylum that Smart wrote his *Song to David*, which was published in 1763; this extraordinary production is his one claim to immortality. It is incoherent, vague and distracted, but it is full of astonishing audacities and beauties; of which these are examples taken almost at random:—

The wealthy crops of whitening rice
'Mongst thyine woods and groves of spice
For Adoration grow;
And marshall'd in the fencèd land,
The peaches and pomegranates stand,
Where wild carnations blow.

For Adoration ripening canes,
And coco's purest milk detains
The western pilgrim's staff;
Where rain in clasping boughs inclos'd,
And vines with oranges dispos'd,
Embower the social laugh.

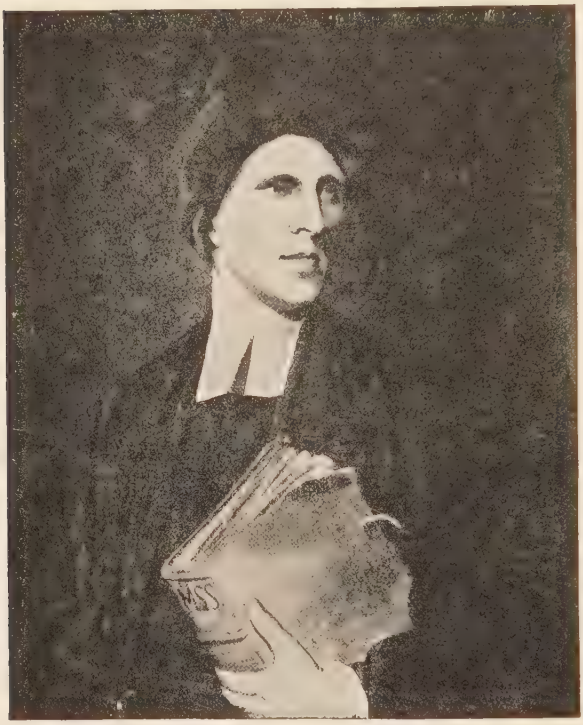
For Adoration, without match,
The scholar bullfinch aims to catch
The soft flute's ivory touch;
And, careless, on the hazel spray,
The daring redbreast keeps at bay
The damsel's greedy clutch.



Christopher Smart
After a Portrait by Old Crome

Two disinterested lovers of our old neglected poetry, who did much to revive the

knowledge of it, were Percy and Warton. **Dr. Thomas Percy** (1729–1811) was born at Bridgenorth on the 13th of April 1729. He was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, and from boyhood was destined for the Church. He became Dean of Carlisle, and for the last thirty years of his life was Bishop of Dromore. He dabbled early in Chinese and Icelandic, but soon settled down to the study of Early English. His famous *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* appeared in three volumes in 1765, and was a considerable factor in the development of taste. **Thomas Warton** (1728–1790) was also a clergyman, but of a more academic type. He belonged to a family of poets and antiquaries, and was the son of an Oxford professor of poetry of the same name (1687–1745). His brother was Joseph Warton (1722–1800), headmaster of Winchester, and editor of Pope. Thomas wrote much in verse, and was poet-laureate from 1785 to the time of his death, but he is best remembered in connection with the *History of English Poetry*, on which he was occupied for many years. This was not completed; the last instalment appeared in 1781, with the promise of a final volume which was never issued. Both the Wartons and Percy were intimate with Dr. Johnson, and formed part of his circle.



Thomas Percy
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

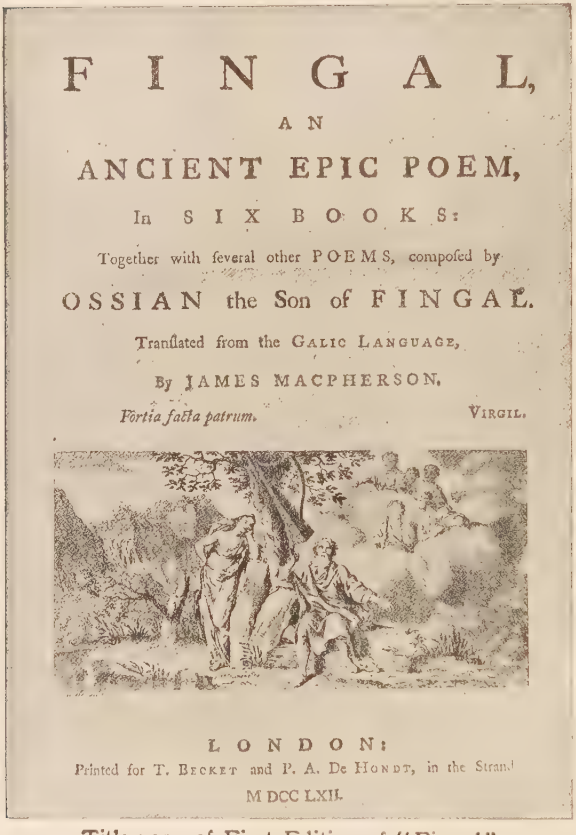
Thomas Warton
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

James MacPherson (1736–1796), with whose name that of OSSIAN is inevitably connected, was a Highlander, who was born at Kingussie on the 27th of October 1736. He was educated at his parish school and at Aberdeen, perhaps at Edinburgh also; he came north again to be a schoolmaster at Ruthven. There can be no

reasonable doubt that he did collect genuine snatches of ancient Gaelic song, and that he was encouraged by several cultivated friends to travel through the Highlands in 1759 in search of more. In 1760 he printed anonymously his *Fragments of Ancient Gaelic Poetry*, and in 1762 an epic, in six books, called *Fingal*, which he professed to have translated from Ossian. To this day it is undecided what were the exact materials which MacPherson used. Neither in the cases mentioned, nor in that of his *Temora* (1763), could he be induced to display his Gaelic originals. This led to his being accused of sheer forgery, and Dr. Johnson openly charged him with imposture. He replied that he copied the poetry of Ossian "from old MSS.," but these he obstinately declined to produce. Johnson declared the whole thing to be "another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood." But modern criticism has not dismissed the matter with such high-handedness. It is now certain that Gaelic poetry attributed to or connected with Ossian or Oisin had been known in the Highlands of Scotland since the sixteenth century, and it is further certain that some of MacPherson's "translations" coincide with genuine Gaelic tradition. The original text, as it was called, of Ossian's poems, never forthcoming in MacPherson's life, was at last published in 1818, but it only made the darkness denser, for in large measure it was found to consist of MacPherson translated back into modern Gaelic, with admixture of fragments which were probably genuine and of considerable antiquity. It has been noted that in authentic Celtic romance the two cycles, the Fennian and the Ossianic, are never mingled, but that this is incessantly done by MacPherson. On the whole, it is probable that MacPherson was in possession, not indeed of MSS., but of copious fragments orally preserved, that he did not choose to admit their incoherency, and that he set himself to build around them a fictitious "epical" narrative, counting upon the credulity of his readers. Having once started this partial deception, he could never venture to withdraw his broad statements, and he descended to the grave under the stigma of forgery and falsehood. If he had been content to tell the plain truth, the great value of his paraphrases and expansions would have been more freely acknowledged, and Dr. Johnson need not have provided himself with "a stout oaken plant," nor have spoken of "the menaces of a ruffian."

James MacPherson
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

MacPherson continued to lead an adventurous life, but added nothing more of value to literature. He took advantage of appointments in Florida and India to amass a comfortable fortune, and for sixteen years he was M.P. for Camelford, in Cornwall. He died at Badenoch, an estate which he had bought in his native county of Inverness-shire, on the 17th of February 1796, and was buried—marvellous to relate—in Westminster Abbey. The leading incidents of his life have until quite lately remained obscure, for MacPherson was one of those men who love mystery for its own sake.



FINGAL,

AN

ANCIENT EPIC POEM,

In SIX BOOKS:

Together with feveral other POEMS, compofed by

OSSIAN the Son of FINGAL.

Tranflated from the GALIC LANGUAGE,

By JAMES MACPHERSON.

Fortia facta patrum. VIRGIL.

LONDON:

Printed for T. BECKET and P. A. De HONDT, in the Strand.

M DCC LXII.

Title-page of First Edition of "Fingal"

FROM "FINGAL."

Son of the chief of generous steeds! high-bounding king of spears. Strong arm in every perilous toil. Hard heart that never yields. Chief of the pointed arms of death. Cut down the foe; let no white sail bound round dark Inistore. Be thine arm like thunder. Thine eyes like fire, thy heart of solid rock. Whirl round thy sword as a meteor at night, and lift thy shield like the flame of death. Son of the chief of generous steeds, cut down the foe; destroy.—The hero's heart beat high. But Swaran came with battle. He cleft the shield of Gaul in twain; and the sons of the desart fled.

Now Fingal arose in his might, and thrice he reared his voice. Cromla answered around, and the sons of the desart stood still.—They bent their red faces to earth, ashamed at the presence of Fingal. He came like a cloud of rain in the days of the sun, when slow it rolls on the hill, and fields expect the shower. Swaran beheld the terrible king of Morven, and stopped in the midst of his course. Dark he leaned on his spear, rolling his red eyes around. Silent and tall he seemed as an oak on the banks of Lubar, which had its branches blasted of old by the lightning of heaven.—It bends over the stream, and the gray moss whistles in the wind: so stood the king. His thousands pour around the hero, and the darkness of battle gathers on the hill.

The greatest literary discovery, however, of the middle of the eighteenth century was the novel. In late years criticism has dwelt more and more seriously on the position of those who practically created the most entertaining and the most versatile of all the sections of modern literature. With due respect to the writers of fiction from the sixteenth century down to Defoe

and Marivaux, it was in the year 1740 that the European novel, as we understand it, began to exist. The final decay of the theatre led to the craving on the part of English readers for an amusement which should be to them what the seeing of comedies had been to their parents, and of tragedies to their grand-parents. The didactic plays of such writers as Lillo, who lived until 1739, were practically the latest amusements of the old school of play-goers, who were weary of drama, weary of the old pompous heroic story, of chronicles of pseud-Atalantic scandal, of the debased picaresque romance. Something entirely new was wanted to amuse the jaded mind of Europe, and that new thing was invented by the fat little printer of Salisbury Court. SAMUEL RICHARDSON conceived what Taine has called the "roman anti-romanesque," the novel which dealt entirely with a realistic study of the human heart set in a frame of contemporary middle-class manners, not in any way touched up or heightened, but depending for the interest it excited solely on its appeal to man's interest in the mirrored face of man.

Samuel Richardson

After the Portrait by Mason Chamberlin

It was a particularly fortunate thing that in this far-spreading work of Richardson's he was accompanied by several writers who were almost his coevals, who were not subjugated by his prestige, but each of whom pushed on the same important reform in a province peculiarly favourable to himself. In considering the first great blossoming of the English novel, we find that a single quarter of a century included all the great novels of the age, and that Richardson was neither imitated nor over-shadowed, but supported by such wholly original fellow-labourers as Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and Goldsmith. Each of our first five novelists presented a gift of his own to the new-born infant, prose fiction, and we must now consider what these gifts were.

What was Richardson's addition to literature may be described in a condensed form as a combination of art in the progress of a narrative, force in the evolution of pathos, and morality founded upon a profound study of conduct. Of the group, he was the one who wrote least correctly; Richardson, as a pure man of letters, is the inferior, not merely of Fielding and Sterne, but of Smollett. He knows no form but the tedious and imperfect artifice of a series of letters. He is often without distinction, always without elegance and wit; he is pedantic, careless, profuse; he seems to write for hours and hours, his wig thrown over the back of a chair, his stockings down at heel. But the accidents of his life and temperament had inducted him into an extraordinary knowledge of the female heart; while his imagination permitted him to clothe the commonplace reflections of very ordinary people in fascinating robes of simple fancy. He was slow of speech and lengthy, but he had a magic gift which obliged every one to listen to him.

Illustration by Stothard to "Clarissa"

The minuteness of Richardson's observations of common life added extremely to the pleasure which his novels gave to readers weary of the vagueness, the empty fustian of the heroic romances. His pages appealed to the instinct in the human mind which delights to be told over again, and told in scrupulous detail, that which it knows already. His readers, encouraged by his almost oily partiality for the moral conventions, gave themselves up to him without suspicion, and enjoyed each little triviality, each coarse touch of life, each prosaic circumstance, with perfect gusto, sure that, however vulgar they might be, they would lead up to the triumph of virtue. What these readers were really assisting at was the triumph of anti-romantic realism.

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) was the son of a London joiner, who, though "a quiet and inoffensive man," thought it wise, after expressing sympathy with the cause of Monmouth, to retire to Derbyshire, where, at a place and exact date

Samuel Richardson.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY JOSEPH HIGHMORE.

uncertain, his son Samuel was born in 1689. As a little boy he was very grave and earnest, preferred the society of women, and, characteristically, earned his first money by composing letters for people who could not write for themselves. His father was too poor to give him the necessary education to study for the Church, which was his obvious career. Throughout his life Richardson suffered from the insufficiency of his early training. In 1706 he was apprenticed to a printer in London, was a long while serving as a diligent compositor and press corrector, and finally, in 1719, was able to start in business for himself in Fleet Street, and then in Salisbury Court. Speaker Onslow employed him to print the Journals of the House of Commons. He slowly prospered, and indulged in a handsome brick house at North End, Fulham. Meanwhile, in 1739, some publishers, conscious of his epistolary facility, persuaded him to compose a collection of *Familiar Letters*, to be issued as a guide to the illiterate. He undertook this task, presently bethought him of a chain of incidents and a moral purpose, and in 1740–41 produced, in four volumes, and as a separate work, what is usually called the first English novel of manners, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded.* This work, or at least the earlier instalment of it, enjoyed a great popularity, but Richardson was slow in following it up. His next book, *Clarissa; or, The History of a Young Lady*, did not appear until 1747–48, and of this novel, a production vastly superior in conception and execution to *Pamela*, the success was extraordinary. The strangest legends are on record to exemplify the hysterical anxiety with which most women and some men followed the slowly developed fortunes of so much "merit and innocence and beauty." A still more complicated study of modern life followed in 1754 in the shape of the adventures of the incomparable *Sir Charles Grandison.* This was the apogee of Richardson's career. Extremely famous, and the centre of a choir of adoring women, he slackened the activity of his business, was elected Master of the Stationers' Company, and moved to a house at Parson's Green. He wrote no more books, but continued to attend in a measure to his business as a printer, and rebuilt his premises at Salisbury Court on a handsomer scale. He died of apoplexy, with which he had long been

Illustration by Stothard to "Clarissa"

threatened, on the 4th of July 1761, in London. There was little external incident in this decorous and prosperous life. Richardson was married twice and had twelve children, so many of whom died early that by 1741 his nerves—he suffered "eleven affecting deaths in two years"—had become permanently injured by the constant strain on his emotions. All through middle life he was the victim of "sudden startings and dizziness," which made him extremely solicitous to avoid excitement. He has left, in one of his letters, a description of his person, so close and evidently faithful, that it enables us to reconstruct with exactitude the short, plump, ruddy printer, with his important manner, his grey eye "always on the ladies," toddling about among "the very large hoops" of his admirers with an expression "as if he would be thought wise, but perhaps the sillier for that." Richardson had some weaknesses; in particular, his vanity was great, and unfortunately it led him easily to the detraction of his contemporaries. He was "very shy of obtruding himself on persons of condition," to whose company Lady Mary Wortley Montagu unkindly says that he was never admitted, but he watched their movements closely out of his keen, down-looking eyes. In that age, when successful authors easily took the fashionable world by storm, Richardson remained a tradesman. He was happiest with his pen in his hand, writing long epistles to his "dearest ladies," the younger of whom became at last so numerous that they called him in return their "dear papa." Of his correspondents the most enthusiastic and the most voluminous was a certain Lady Bradshaigh, to whom we owe much of our knowledge of the excellent little moralist. It should be pointed out that in each of his novels Richardson employs the form of letters, the only one in which he was at ease, for the evolution of his story.

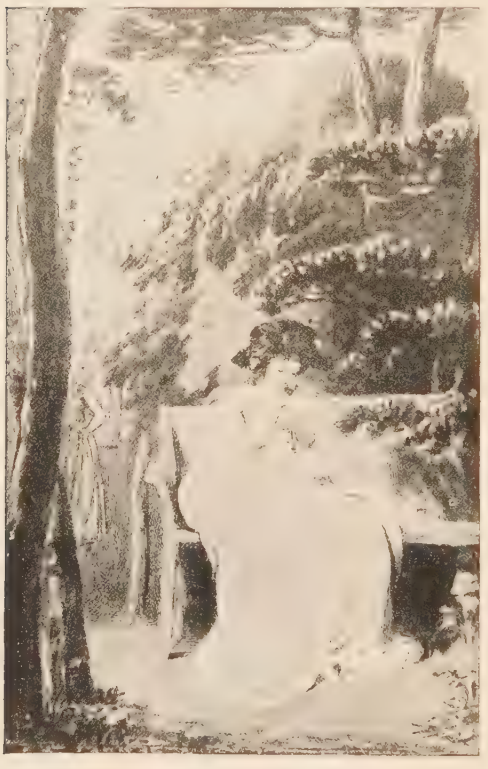


Illustration by Stothard to "Clarissa"

FROM "CLARISSA."

I am just returned from attending the afflicted parents in an effort they made to see the corpse of their beloved child. They had requested my company, and that of the good Mrs. Norton. A last leave, the Mother said, she *must* take.

An *effort*, however, it was, and no more. The moment they came in sight of the coffin, before the lid could be put aside: "O my dear," said the Father, retreating, "I cannot,

Sir

Your Letter, unsubscribed and without a Date, as well as without a Name, came to my Hands by the Penny Post on Tuesday last, inclosed in one from a Gentleman who subscribes W. S.

You desire to know, if I concur with you in your Sentiments relating to the Compromise between Sir Charles Grandison and Clementina, in the Article of Religion. Those Sentiments are contained in your Wishes, that I had given another Turn to it, and had gone further in the Subject: "For, say you, as such an Agreement is now almost a Point "in Course in the Marriage of Persons of different Religions, if you had "made use of that Handle to expose the Impiety of such a Practice and "that your Girls Souls were as much to be regarded as Boys, some few "of those Reasons which you would have them bring to, might have done "more Service towards putting a Stop to so wicked a Practice, than "the best set Discourse could have done; Multitudes of young People "of both Persuasions reading the one, who must have been utter Strangers "to the other."

I am very much obliged to you, Sir, for your good Opinion of my Undertaking, and in general of the Execution, and of the Service to Mankind that may result from it.

Give me Leave to say, that I have shewn in the Volumes, when the Subject required it, that I have the Honour to be of your Opinion, as to this Compromise. I have in Vol III. Octavo, pp. 105, 106. made the Bishop (Clementina's Brother) thus say to Mr. Grandison, after a Debate between them on the two Religions, "You will call to mind, Chevalier, that your Church allows of a Possibility of Salvation out of its Pale — Ours does not." — "My Lord," answers the Chevalier, "Our Church allows not of its Members indulging themselves in capital Errors, against Conviction."

Mr. Grandison was a young Man: He pretends not to be divested of Passion. It was necessary to let the Porretta Family, and the Reader, who, it was supposed, would not be unconcerned in the Destiny of Clementina, see, that he was desirous to make some Sacrifices, for those of the Family made, in Consideration of so excellent a Creature, who had suffered so much, and was actually in a State of Suffering, for her Love of him. What could he do more, he asks Dr. Bartlett, than to make such an Offer? He considers it as a very great Concession, tho' he must know, that it was, as you observe, a too usual one. And he tells his warmest Relations, the Grandisons

in particular, "that he would not have come into such a Compromise, no, not
" in favour of a Princess, in a Beginning Address." And this he says, in Answer
to the General Question, sneeringly put, "What, Chevalier, must the poor
" Daughters have done, that they should have been left to Perdition?"
And this put by him, when he knew that Mr. Grandison was of a Religion
that inforces its Professors with more Charity, than does that which allows
not Salvation out of its own Pale.

Who that think the Powells Family Bigotted, must not have allowed them
to think Mr. Grandison so, had he not made some such sort of Concession, as
he expected them to make: and even a much greater than he offered? The
Sons of the Family? And who were much more apprehensive of their Daugh-
ters Non-Adherence to their Religion, if his Wife, than hopeful of what they called
his Conversion.

Some Concessions are expected to be made in all Marriage-Treaties: and (com-
mony to what was proposed in this) greater on the Man's than on the Woman's
Side; since it is understood, that the Wife is now the Property of the Husband
than he is hers; and he therefore makes an Acquisition. Pecuniary Ad-
vantages could not have affected Mr. Grandison. Nothing but what touched
his Principles could. This was a severe trial to him. Clementina, at the
time, was the only Woman he could have loved. He knew not then Miss
Byron: But we have Reason to believe, from different Parts of the Story, that he thought
himself not unhappy that it was owing to Clementina herself, and not to him, that he was
not put upon carrying this Compromise into Effect, notwithstanding the Frequency of
such Stipulations in Marriage-Treaties between People of different Persuasions.

That these Observations lie scattered, as I may say, in different Parts of the
Story, as owing, a good deal, to the manner of Writing, to the Memorial, as it may be
called, as Occasions arose as the Story proceeded. A manner of writing, that has its
Conveniencies and Inconveniencies. The latter in such Cases as that before us; the
former, in giving Opportunities to describe the Agitations that fill the Heart on a
material and interesting Event being undecided.

You will be pleased to observe, that I had a very nice and difficult Task
to manage: To convince nice and delicate Ladies, who might be imagined would
sit in Judgment upon the Conduct of a Man in a Love-Case, who was supposed
to be nearly perfect, and proposed as a Pattern; that a Lady so excellent as Cle-
mentina, of so high a Family and Fortune; all her Relations adoring her,
so deeply in Love with him; yet so delicate in her whole Behaviour to
him; was not slighted by him. I have said, He was to make some Sacrifices
to his Principles, in different Scenes of the Story, were duly attended to: For he was dis-
tracted on the Side of his Generosity, his Compassion, his Gratitude, his Love; together
with his Steadfastness in his Faith, I presume, that he would be thought a Com-
batter for his Religion, in the whole Affair between him and Clementina: Not
only what he suffered, and how he persevered in his Duty. Dr. Bartlett's Ed. Letter, Vol. I
p. 99 to 102. And his following 4th and 5th Letters.

In an Omission in the Sixth Volume Octavo, which is supplied p. 401
402. Lucy Selby is made there to expreſs herſelf, retroſpecting this Compromiſe, in
order to weaken the Danger to Religion, that might be apprehended from ſo Ex-
ample — "How could Sir Charles, ſo thorough an Engliſhman, have been happy with
"as an Italian Wife? His Heart indeed is generouſly open and benevolent to People of
"all Countries. He is, in the nobleſt Senſe, a Citizen of the World: But, ſee we not,
"that his long Reſidence abroad, has only the more endeared them to the Religion, the Go-
"vernment, the Manners of England?" —

"How was this noble-minded Man entangled by Delicacies of Sentiment,
"by Friendſhip, by Compaſſion, that he ſhould ever have been likely to be en-
"gaged in a Family of Roman Catholics, and lived half of his Days out of
"his beloved Country, and the other Half to have loſt, as to the Worlds' Eye,
"ſuch an Example in it!

"I know he would have made it his Study to prevent any Miſchief to his
"Neighbours from the active Zeal of his Lady's Confeſſor, had a certain Com-
"promiſe taken Effect. I remember the Hint he gave to Father Ma-
"refcotti. But would even that good Man have thought himſelf bound
"to offend Faith with Heretics in ſuch a Caſe?"

And in the Concluding Note to the Work, I have, as Editor, further endeavoured to obviate the apprehended Miſchief, by not contending with ſuch of my Readers, whoſe laudable Zeal for the true Faith, led them to conſider this Compromiſe as a Blemiſh in Sir Charles's Character. See the Place, p. 300, Octavo Edition.

I need not, Sir, I preſume, intrude further on your Patience, on this Subject. Repeatedly I thank you for your kind Letter. I could wiſh that I might Know to whom I have thus explained, and perhaps explored myſelf: At leaſt, for a few Lines to acquaint me, whether what I have written, without Reſerve, and as my Memory ſerved me, is in any manner ſatisfactory to ſuch a ſolid Reaſoner, and worthy a Judge of Religious and Moral Subjects, as you appear to be to,

Sir,

Your obliged humble Servant

S. Richardſon.

Excuſe, Sir, my bad writing. Tranſcribing is always painful to me.

Salisbury Court, Fleet-ſtreet,
March 22. 1754.

I find I cannot, bear it! Had I—Had I—Had I never been hard-hearted!" Then turning round to his Lady, he had but just time to catch her in his arms, and prevent her sinking on the floor. "O my dearest life!" said he, "this is too much! too much indeed! Let us, let us retire." Mrs. Norton, who (attracted by the awful receptacle) had but just left the good lady, hastened to her. "Dear, dear woman!" cried the unhappy parent, flinging her arms about her neck; "bear me, bear me, hence! O my child, my child! My own Clarissa Harlowe! Thou pride of my life so lately! Never, never more must I behold thee!"

I supported the unhappy father, Mrs. Norton the sinking mother, into the next parlour. She threw herself on a settee there, he into an elbow-chair by her; the good woman at her feet, her arms clasped round her waist. The two mothers, as I may call them, of my beloved cousin, thus tenderly engaged. What a variety of distress in these woful scenes!

Illustration by Stothard to "Clarissa"

Very different in kind, though of equal value to literature, is the gift to his generation of HENRY FIELDING, whose *Joseph Andrews* in 1742 succeeds so oddly to the *Pamela* of 1740–41. He also set out to copy human nature faithfully and minutely, but his view of life was more eclectic than that of Richardson. A much greater writer, in his own virile way one of the most skilful of all manipulators of English, he is saved by his wider learning and experience from the banality of Richardson. As Sir Leslie Stephen has well said, Fielding, more than any other writer, gives the very form and pressure of the eighteenth century. He is without the sensibility of Richardson, which he disdained; his observation of the movements of the heart is more superficial; he cannot probe so deeply into the fluctuating thoughts of woman. He has the defects of too great physical health; he is impatient of the half-lights of character, of nervous impressionability. He can spare few tears over Clarissa, and none at all over Clementina; he laughs in the sunshine with Ariosto. He also is a moralist, but of quite another class than Richardson; he is pitiful of the frailties of instinct, sorry for those who fall from excess of strength. Hence, while Richardson starts the cloistered novel of psychology, of febrile analysis,

Fielding takes a manlier note, and deals with conduct from its more adventurous side.

The various qualities of Fielding are seen to successive advantage in *Joseph Andrews* with its profuse humour, in *Jonathan Wild* with its cynical irony, in *Amelia* with its tenderness and sentiment; but it is in *Tom Jones* that the full force of the novelist is revealed. This was the first attempt made by any writer to depict in its fulness the life of a normal man, without help from extraordinary conditions or events, without any other appeal to the reader than that made simply to his interest in a mirror of his own affections, frailties, hopes, and passions. Fielding in each of his works, but in *Tom Jones* pre-

Richardson's Dining-room at the Grange
Fulham

Richardson reading the MS. of "Sir Charles Grandison" to his friends

From an original Drawing by Miss Highmore

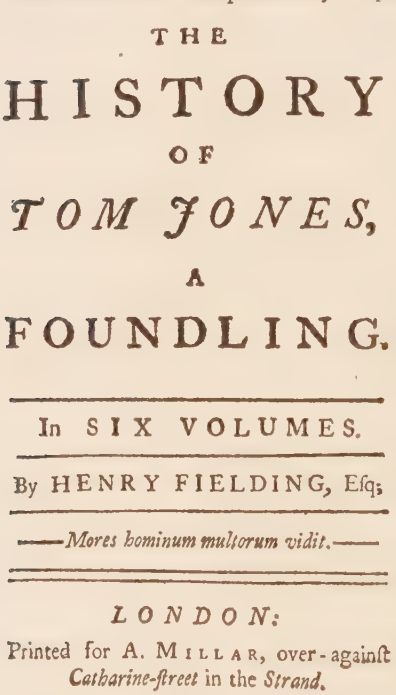
eminently, is above all things candid and good-humoured. He is a lover

of morals, but he likes them to be sincere; he has no palliation for their rancid varieties. He has his eye always on conduct; he is keen to observe not what a man pretends or protests, but what he does, and this he records to us, sometimes with scant respect for our susceptibilities. But it has been a magnificent advantage for English fiction to have near the head of it a writer so vigorous, so virile, so devoid of every species of affectation and hypocrisy. In all the best of our later novelists there has been visible a strain of sincere manliness which comes down to them in direct descent from Fielding, and which it would be a thousand pities for English fiction to relinquish.

The Tomb of Henry Fielding at Lisbon

Henry Fielding (1707–1754) was the eldest of the five children of Lieutenant Edmund Fielding and his wife Sarah Gould, of East Stour, in Dorsetshire; the novelist was born on the 22nd of April 1707, at Sharpham Park, the house of his grandfather, Sir Henry Gould. The family resided at East Stour until Henry Fielding was eleven; he went up to Eton, and is said to have left that school to proceed directly to Leyden to study law under "the learned Vitriarius" in 1726. Returning to London in 1728, he endeavoured to support himself by writing for the theatres, in which he was encouraged by his celebrated kinswoman, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. He produced a large number of burlesques and farces, some of which (in particular *Tom Thumb*, afterwards *The Tragedy of Tragedies*, in 1730) enjoyed considerable success; but the plays of Fielding were most of them slight and flimsy, and he did not make them his regular employment after 1737. In the spring of 1735 Fielding married Miss Charlotte Cradock of Salisbury, a lady whose mental and physical characteristics, idealised by her lover's fancy, reappear in the portraits of Sophia Western and of Amelia;

he had known her for many years. For a short time he kept house at East Stour with splendid extravagance, and then, "having entirely devoured a little patrimony," came up to London again. The Licensing Act of 1737 put difficulties in the way of his dramatic projects which he found insuperable, and he dropped his puppet-shows for the study of the law, supporting himself in the meantime by journalism. Fielding now for a while worked hard at his profession, and we are told that he assiduously attended the Wiltshire sessions. The success of Richardson's *Pamela* in 1740 drew his attention to the possibility of parodying that tale of female virtue rewarded, in a parallel tale of no less consummate masculine virtue, and *Joseph Andrews* was the result in 1742. Richardson was excessively angry, and for the remainder of Fielding's life continued to be his detractor. Fielding now recommenced for a while his career as dramatist with much activity, but with little or no success; the latest of all his plays, of which nearly thirty have survived, was *The Wedding Day* of 1743. Later in the same year Fielding collected in three volumes his *Miscellanies*, consisting of poems, plays, essays, *A Journey from this World to the Next*, and—most important of all—the sinister romance of *Mr. Jonathan Wild*, which occupied the whole of the third volume; this had probably been written earlier than *Joseph Andrews*. It was the pretended biography of a notorious rogue who had been hanged at Tyburn twenty years before. The biographers of Fielding have been unable to follow his career during the next six years. It is thought that his admirable wife died towards the close of 1743, and we are told that "the fortitude with which he met all the other calamities of life deserted him on this most trying occasion." He married again, after four years of widowhood; his second wife, "an excellent creature," had been his first wife's maid, and his only associate when her loss had left him broken-hearted. Fielding is faintly traced in many parts of town and country through these years, and it is thought that the Duke of Bedford and Lord Lyttelton were among those friends whose good-nature enabled him to survive. At last, in the closing days of 1748, he was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Westminster, and his worst financial difficulties were over. During his retirement Fielding had been writing a novel, which was by this time complete; it was published in February 1749 as *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*. He had been paid the relatively large price of £700 for this book before it had been published three months; it was universally read and widely imitated at home and abroad. Fielding was now settled in a house in Bow Street, which was to be his home almost to the last. He was eminently zealous and successful as a magistrate, and set himself to check the lawlessness which had invaded the streets of London. In the winter



THE

HISTORY

OF

TOM JONES,

A

FOUNDLING.

In SIX VOLUMES.

By HENRY FIELDING, Esq;

——*Mores hominum multorum vidit.*——

LONDON:

Printed for A. MILLAR, over-against *Catharine-street* in the *Strand*.

MDCCXLIX.

Title-page of First Edition of "Tom Jones"

Henry Fielding

Know all Men by these Presents That I Henry Fielding of the Middle Temple Esqr. for and in Consideration of the Sum of One hundred ninety nine Pounds Six Shillings of Lawful Money of Great Britain to me in Hand paid by Andrew Millar of St Clements Danes in the Strand Bookseller, the Receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and of which I do acquit the said Andrew Millar his Heirs and Assigns Have bargained sold delivered assigned and set over and by these Presents do bargain sell deliver assign and set over all that my right Title Right and Property in and to a certain Book printed in two Volumes known and called by the Name and Title of the History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his friend Mr Abraham Adams written in imitation of the Manner of Cervantes Author of Don Quixote, and also in and to a certain Book called the Name of Miss Lucy in Town a Sequel to the Virgin unmasqued and also in and to a certain Pamphlet called a full Vindication of the Dutchess Dowager of Marlborough &c with all Improvements Additions or Alterations which from time to time are or hereafter shall at any time be made by me or any one else by my Authority to the said Book Books or Pamphlets To have and to hold the said bargained Premises unto the said Andrew Millar his Heirs Executors or Assigns to the only proper Use and Behoof of the said Andrew Millar his Heirs Executors or Assigns for ever and I do hereby Covenant for and with the said Andrew Millar his Heirs Executors and Assigns that I the said Henry Fielding the Author of the said bargained Premises have not at any time heretofore done committed or suffered any Act or Thing whatsoever by means whereof the said bargained Premises or any Part thereof is or shall be impeached or incumbered in any wise and I the said Henry Fielding for myself my Heirs and Assigns shall warrant and defend the said bargained Premises for ever against all Persons whatsoever claiming under me my Heirs Executors or Assigns. In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this 13 of April 1742

Signed Sealed and delivered by the
within named Hen: Fielding the
Day and year within mentioned
in the Presence of Wm Young
Wm Hawkes

Henry Fielding

Fielding's MS. Assignment of "Joseph Andrews"

of 1749 he was dangerously ill with an unusually severe attack of the gout, and though he recovered, he was probably never quite well again; in 1751 he seemed to Hurd "a poor, emaciated, worn-out rake, whose gout and infirmities have got the better even of his buffoonery," though Fielding was at that date only forty-four. He was now writing his novel of *Amelia*, which was published late in 1751. Fielding attempted to return to journalism, and edited *The Covent Garden Journal* for a few months, under the pseudonym of Sir Alexander Drawcansir. In 1753 he, like the rest of England, was deeply excited over the case of the mysterious disappearance of Elizabeth Canning, who professed to have been kidnapped by gipsies. Fielding entered into this queer business with extreme gusto, and the latest work he published is a favourable exposition of Betty Canning's case. But Fielding was now very ill, and his condition was made worse by his persistence in staying in town to break up a notorious gang of cut-throats who were infesting London. When at last he got away to Bath, his health "was reduced to the last extremity." He dragged miserably through a very severe winter, and spent part of the following spring at Fordhook, near Ealing, where he had a little house. But the doctors insisted on a warmer climate, and in June 1754 Fielding started for Lisbon. In his *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (1755) he has given particulars of the adventures and inconveniences of this expedition, which he endured with philosophy and courage. He died at Lisbon on the 8th of October 1754, and lies buried in the English cemetery. The reckless generosity and sanguine improvidence of Fielding were shocking to the moralists of his own time, and there can be no question that he had something of the wildness of Tom Jones in his youth. But he was a man of elevated and tender feeling, quixotically courageous, full of love for his fellow-beings, and always ready to share his last guinea with a poorer man than himself. Mr. Austin Dobson's close examination of the incidents of his somewhat shadowy career has much lessened the scandal with which Fielding's name used to be accompanied.

Illustration by Michael Angelo Rooker to "A Voyage to Lisbon"

The Green Room at Drury Lane.

AFTER THE PICTURE BY WILLIAM HOGARTH.

In the possession of Sir Charles Tennant, Bart.

From "Tom Jones."

The Gothic style of building could produce nothing nobler than Mr. Allworthy's house. There was an air of grandeur in it that struck you with awe, and rivalled the beauties of the best Grecian architecture; and it was as commodious within as venerable without.

It stood on the south-east side of a hill, but nearer the bottom than the top of it, so as to be sheltered from the north-east by a grove of old oaks, which rose above it in a gradual ascent of near half a mile, and yet high enough to enjoy a most charming prospect of the valley beneath.

In the midst of the grove was a fine lawn, sloping down towards the house, near the summit of which rose a plentiful spring, gushing out of a rock covered with firs, and forming a constant cascade of about thirty feet, not carried down a regular flight of steps, but tumbling in a natural fall over the broken and mossy stones, till it came to the bottom of the rock; then running off in a pebbly channel, that with many lesser falls winded along, till it fell into a lake at the foot of the hill, about a quarter of a mile below the house on the south side, and which was seen from every room in the front. Out of this lake, which filled the centre of a beautiful plain, embellished with groups of beeches and elms, and fed with sheep, issued a river, that, for several miles, was seen to meander through an amazing variety of meadows and woods, till it emptied itself into the sea; with a large arm of which, and an island beyond it, the prospect was closed.

Illustration by T. Hulett to "Joseph Andrews"

From "The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon."

A most tragical incident fell out this day at sea. While the ship was under sail, but making as will appear no great way, a kitten, one of four of the feline inhabitants of the cabin, fell from the window into the water; an alarm was immediately given to the captain, who was then upon deck, and received it with the utmost concern and many bitter oaths. He immediately gave orders to the steersman in favour of the poor thing, as he called it; the sails were instantly slackened, and all hands, as the phrase is, employed to recover the poor animal. I was, I own, extremely surprised at all this; less indeed at the captain's extreme tenderness than at his conceiving any possibility of success; for if puss had had nine thousand instead of nine lives, I concluded they had been all lost. The boatswain, however, had more sanguine hopes, for, having stript himself of his jacket, breeches, and shirt, he leapt boldly into the water, and to my great astonishment in a few minutes returned to the ship, bearing the motionless animal in his mouth.

Sarah Fielding (1710–1768), sister of the more celebrated novelist, was born at East Stour on the 8th of November 1710. Her first and best novel, *The Adventures of David Simple*, 1744, appeared anonymously, and was attributed to the author of *Joseph Andrews*, who contributed an interesting preface to the second edition of his sister's book. She was living in lodgings with him during the composition of *Tom Jones*, and when he married again she withdrew to Bath, where she became a prominent figure in society until her death in 1768. She wrote *The Governess*, 1749, and other works of didactic entertainment; but *David Simple*, composed in the company and possibly at the suggestion of her illustrious brother is her only production of merit.

Tom Jones refused admittance by the Nobleman's Porter
V. 3 p. 6
Published as the Act directs 1791 by J. Sibbald Edin.r
Rowlandson Inv.t & fe.

Illustration by Rowlandson to "Tom Jones"

By **Laurence Sterne** the course of fiction was reversed a little way towards Addison and Steele in the two incomparable books which are his legacy to English literature. We call *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* novels, because we know not what else to call them; nor is it easy to define their fugitive and rare originality. Sterne was not a moralist in the mode of Richardson or of Fielding; it is to be feared that he was a complete ethical heretic; but he brought to his country as gifts the strained laughter that breaks into tears, and the melancholy wit that saves itself by an outburst of buffoonery. He introduced into the coarse and heavy life of the eighteenth century elements of daintiness, of persiflage, of moral versatility; he prided himself on the reader's powerlessness to conjecture what was coming next. A French critic compared Sterne, most felicitously, to one of the little bronze satyrs of antiquity in whose hollow bodies exquisite odours

were stored. He was carried away by the tumult of his nerves, and it became a paradoxical habit with him to show himself exactly the opposite of what he was expected to be. You had to unscrew him for the aroma to escape. His unseemly, passionate, pathetic life burned itself away at the age of fifty-four, only the last eight of which had been concerned with literature. Sterne's influence on succeeding fiction has been durable but interrupted. Ever and anon his peculiar caprices, his selected elements, attract the imitation of some more or less analogous spirit. The extreme beauty of his writing has affected almost all who desire to use English prose as though it were an instrument not less delicate than English verse. Nor does the fact that a

Shandy Hall

From a Photograph by Duncan, York

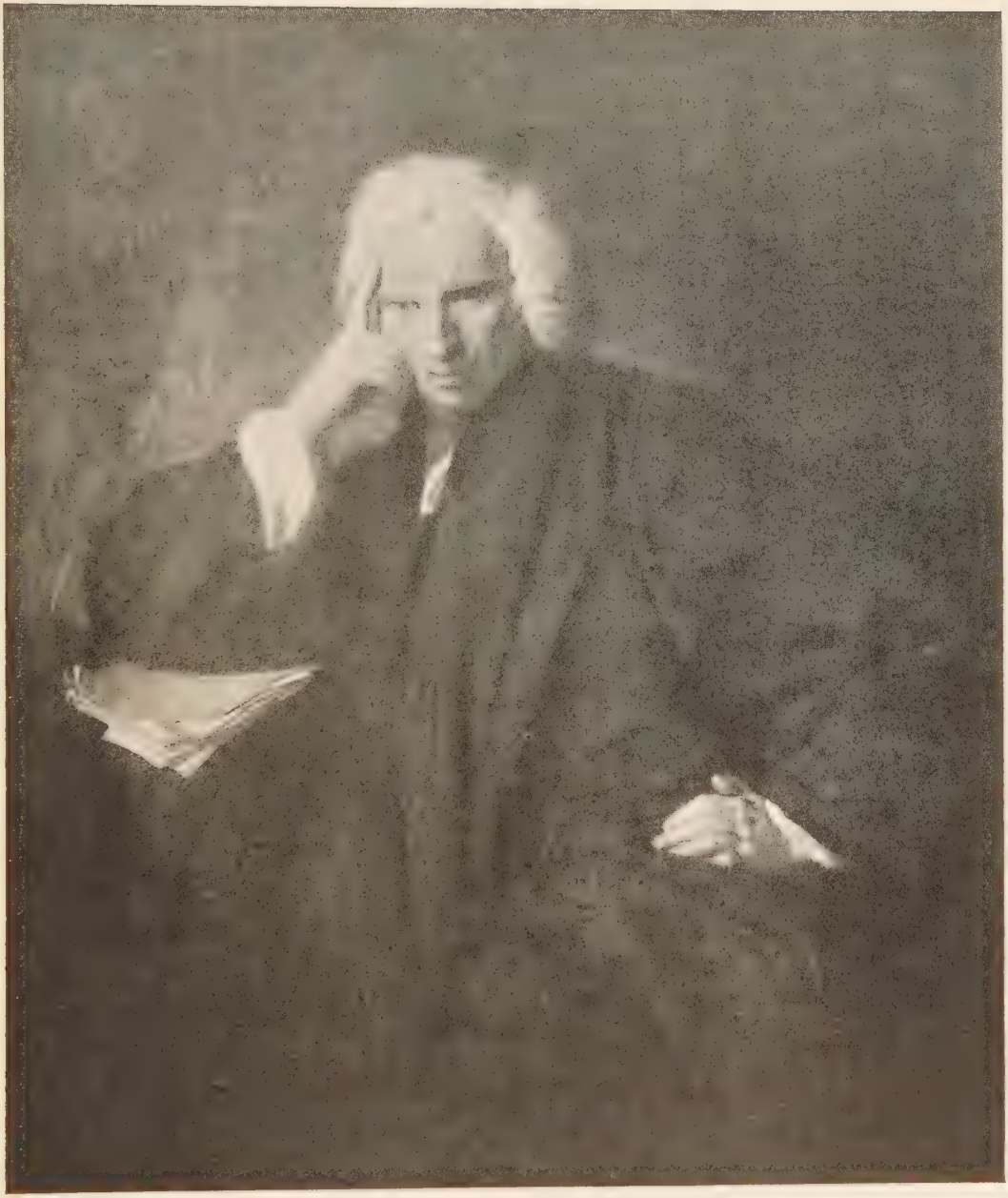
surprising number of his "best passages" were stolen by Sterne from older writers militate against his fame, because he always makes some little adaptation, some concession to harmony, which stamps him a master, although unquestionably a deliberate plagiarist. This fantastic sentimentalist and disingenuous idealist comes close, however, to Richardson in one faculty, the value which he extracts from the juxtaposition of a variety of trifling details artfully selected so as to awaken the sensibility of ordinary minds.

Laurence Sterne (1713–1768) was the second of the many children of Ensign Roger Sterne of Chudleigh's Foot. He was born on the 24th of November 1713 at Clonmel, where the regiment, just returned from Dunkirk, was disbanded. In less than a year the household was uprooted again, and for the next ten years was on the incessant move from one Irish barracks to another. In 1723 Sterne was sent to school at Halifax, under the protection of some Yorkshire relatives; he stayed there eight years. In the meantime, his father, having been run through the body at the rock of Gibraltar in a duel about a goose, had retired to Jamaica "with an impaired

constitution," and had died there in 1731. Laurence Sterne, still under the care of his Yorkshire cousins, was sent to Jesus College, Cambridge. Here he stayed until he took his B.A., and then in 1736 went to York to live with his uncle, Dr. Jacques Sterne, the archdeacon. He is understood to have "employed his brains" for this "ungrateful person," who nevertheless obtained for him, when he took priest's orders in 1738, the living of Sutton-in-the-Forest and two small prebends. In 1741 Sterne married Miss Elizabeth Lumley, who presently brought him another living, the Vicarage of Stillington. He was therefore not ill provided for, and he lived at Sutton for nearly twenty years, making "books, painting, fiddling, and shooting his chief amusements." He also, having become estranged from his wife, indulged in a long chain of intertwisted flirtations, some of which were of a singularly indiscreet character. The early career of Sterne, however, remains very obscure, and was doubtless very uneventful until he reached the age of forty-six, when he was led by we know not what fortunate impulse to write *Tristram Shandy;* the two first volumes of this book were printed in York in 1759, and Sterne took them up to London to be published early in 1760. But he found that the fame of them had preceded him, and before he had been a day in London the lodgings he had taken in Pall Mall were besieged by fashionable callers. Sterne instantly became the lion of the season. The cause of this surprising reception was the enthusiasm of Garrick, who had been overwhelmed by the humour of *Tristram Shandy*, and had "promised" the author of it at dinner to numbers of great people. Sterne presently speaks of himself as moving in the suite of Lord Rockingham, and of his rooms as "filling every hour with great people of the first rank, who strive who shall most honour me." There seems to have been a widespread fear that this diabolically daring satirist would hold his contemporaries up to ridicule in ensuing volumes of his work, and prominent persons took grotesque means of preventing this in their individual cases. Bishop Warburton is said to have gone so far as to send Sterne a purse of gold, although he had never set eyes on him; he presently described him to a friend as an "irrecoverable scoundrel." Meanwhile Sterne was continuing the publication of *Tristram Shandy*, and beginning to issue the *Sermons of Mr. Yorick*, which ultimately extended to seven volumes (1760–1769). He did not stay in London too long; after three months of lionising he withdrew to Coxwold, "a sweet retirement" which one of his new fashionable friends had given him in 1760, and devoted himself to composition. But his fame and his fortune were not able to conceal even from his light-hearted nature the fact that his health was now seriously impaired. After another brilliant season in London, Sterne was

Coxwold Church

From a Photograph by Duncan, York



Laurence Sterne.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

warned that he must not spend the winter in England, and as soon as vols. v. and vi. of *Tristram* were out of the publisher's hands at Christmas 1761, Sterne passed over to France. In Paris he found himself the centre of boundless adulation, which delayed him until a sharp attack of the lungs obliged him to fly further south. Accordingly he sent for his wife and his only child, his daughter Lydia, and then—but it was already July—hastened to Toulouse. Here he stayed nearly a year, in pretty good health; but he tired of the place, and insisted on spending the winter of 1763 at Montpellier, which did not suit him at all. After a gay bout in Paris, Sterne found himself back in his

Caricature of Sterne and Bridges

From Dibdin's "Bibliographical Tour"

parsonage of Sutton in the summer of 1764. In October 1765 Sterne started upon that *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, which is the subject of the most charming of his books (published in 1768); he did not get back till July 1766. In 1767 a ninth volume brought *Tristram Shandy* to an end, though not to a close, for it remains unfinished. The Eliza of the posthumous *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*, 1775, now occupied a great deal of Sterne's attention. This was Mrs. Draper, the widow of an Indian merchant, with whom he carried on a violent sentimental flirtation. She returned to India, and Sterne, with his daughter Lydia, now "an elegant accomplished little slut," went to Coxwold for the autumn and winter of 1767. He came back as usual to London, but he had long been dying of consumption, and the end came rather

London Feb: 24

Dear Mr. Panchaude

my daughter begs a pre-
sent of me — tis a Guitar — it must be strung
with cat gut & of 5 Cords — si chiama in
Italiano, La Chitera di cinque corde" — She
cannot get such a Thing at Marseilles — at Paris
one may have every Thing — would you
be so good to my Girl as to make her happy
in this affeire, by getting some musical
Body to buy one & send it her to Avignon
directed to Mons.r Festo —

I wrote last week to desire you to
permit Mr. Sterne a 100 Louis — — but
be all except the Guitar I shall owe you &
send me y.r Acc.t then, & I will pay it to
Mr. Selvin — direct to me at Mrs
Beckets — all kind respects to my friend
Foley — and my dear friend y.r Sister
& cordially — L.r Sterne

Autograph Letter of Sterne

suddenly on the 18th of March 1768, over a shop in Old Bond Street. His corpse was neglected by the hired watchers, and, although buried in the yard of St. George's, Hanover Square, is said to have been stolen by body-snatchers, who sold it to the Cambridge Professor of Anatomy. Of the temperament of Sterne, no better summary can be given than is provided by himself, when, after describing some misfortune, he says: "But I'll lay a guinea that in half-an-hour I shall be as merry as a monkey, and forget it all."

Illustration by Rowlandson to Sterne's "Sentimental Journey"

FROM "TRISTRAM SHANDY."

When my Father received the letter which brought him the melancholy news of my brother Bobby's death, he was busy calculating the expense of his riding post from Calais to Paris, and so on to Lyons.

'Twas a most inauspicious journey, my Father having had every foot of it to travel over again, and his calculation to begin afresh, when he had almost got to the end of it, by Obadiah's opening the door to inform him the family was out of yeast, and to ask whether he might not take the great coach-horse early in the morning, and ride in search of some. "With all my heart, Obadiah," said my Father, pursuing his journey, "take the coach-horse, and welcome." "But he wants a shoe, poor creature," said Obadiah. "Poor creature," said my Uncle Toby, vibrating the note back again like a string in unison. "Then take the Scotch horse," quoth my Father hastily. "He cannot bear a saddle upon his back," quoth Obadiah, "for the whole world." "The Devil's in that horse; then take Patriot," cried my Father, and shut the door. "Patriot is sold," said Obadiah. "Here's for you!" cried my Father, making a pause, and looking in my Uncle Toby's face as if the thing had not been a matter of fact. "Your worship ordered me to sell him last April," said Obadiah. "Then go on foot for your pains," cried my Father. "I had much rather walk than ride," said Obadiah, shutting the door.

"What plagues!" cried my Father, going on with his calculation. "But the waters are out," said Obadiah, opening the door again.

FROM "A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

I own my first sensations, as soon as I was left solitary and alone in my own chamber in the hotel, were far from being so flattering as I had prefigured them. I walked up gravely to the window in my dusty black coat, and looking through the glass saw all the world in yellow, blue, and green, running at the ring of pleasure. The old with broken lances, and in helmets which had lost their vizards; the young in armour bright, which shone like gold, beplumed with each gay feather of the east; all, all tilting at it, like fascinated knights in tournaments of yore for fame and love. "Alas! poor Yorick!" cried I, "what art thou doing here?"

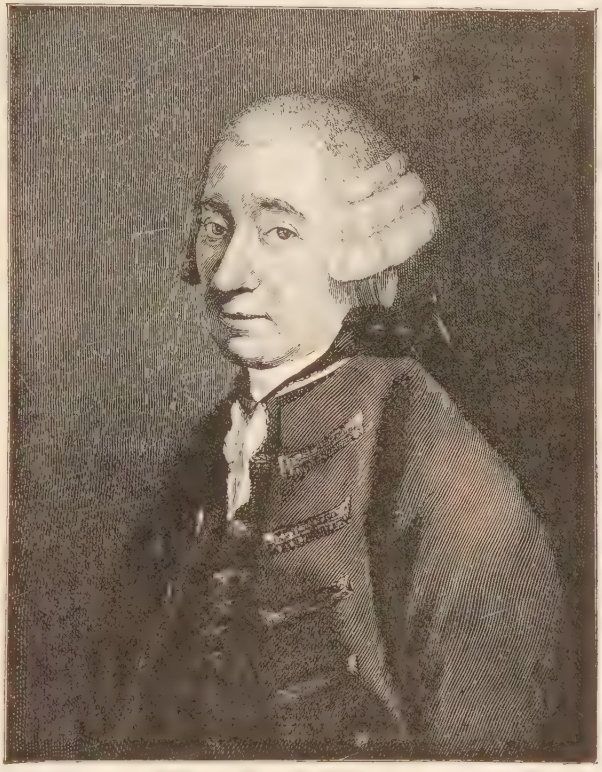
Sterne's "Maria"

From an Original Pastel by Russell at Bayfordbury

If in Sterne the qualities of imagination were heightened, and the susceptibilities permitted to become as feverish and neurotic as possible, the action of TOBIAS SMOLLETT was absolutely the reverse. This rough and strong writer was troubled with no superfluous refinements of instinct. He delighted in creating types of eccentric profligates and ruffians, and to do this was to withdraw from the novel as Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne conceived it, back into a form of the picaresque romance. He did not realise what his greatest compeers were doing, and when he wrote *Roderick Random* he avowedly modelled it on *Gil Blas*, coming, as critics have observed, even closer to the Spanish *picaros* spirit than did Le Sage himself. If Smollett had gone no further than this, and had merely woven out of his head one more romance of the picaresque class, we should never have heard of him. But his own life, unlike those of his three chief rivals, had been adventurous on land and under sail, and he described what he had seen and suffered. Three years later he published *Peregrine Pickle*, and just before he died *Humphry Clinker*. The abundant remainder of his work is negligible, these three books alone being worthy of particular recommendation in a sketch of literature so summary as this.

In the work of the three greater novelists the element of veracity is very

strong, even though in the case of Sterne it may seem concealed beneath a variegated affectation of manner. In each, however, the main aim, and the principal element of originality, is the observation of mankind as it really exists. But Smollett was not great enough to continue this admirable innovation; he went back to the older, easier method of gibbeting a peculiarity and exaggerating an exception. He was also inferior to his rivals in the power of constructing a story, and in his rude zeal to "subject folly to ridicule, and vice to indignation," he raced from one rough episode to another, bestowing very little attention upon that evolution of character which should be the essence of successful fiction. The proper way to regard Smollett is, doubtless, as a man of experience and energy, who was encouraged by the success of the realistic novel to revive the old romance of adventure, and to give it certain new features. The violence of Smollett is remarkable; it was founded on a peculiarity of his own temper, but it gives his characters a sort of contortion of superhuman rage and set grimaces that seem mechanically horrible. When young Roderick Random's cousin wishes to tease him, he has no way of doing it short of hunting him with beagles, and when it is desired that Mrs. Pickle should be represented as ill-tempered, a female like one of the Furies is evoked. But while it is easy to find fault with Smollett's barbarous books, it is not so easy to explain why we continue to read them with enjoyment, nor why their vigorous horse-play has left its mark on novelists so unlike their author as Lever, Dickens, and Charles Reade. Scott, too, acknowledged that he was indebted to the methods of Smollett. The Scotch novelist's best book, moreover, is his latest, and its genial and brisk comicality has done much to redeem the memory of earlier errors of taste.

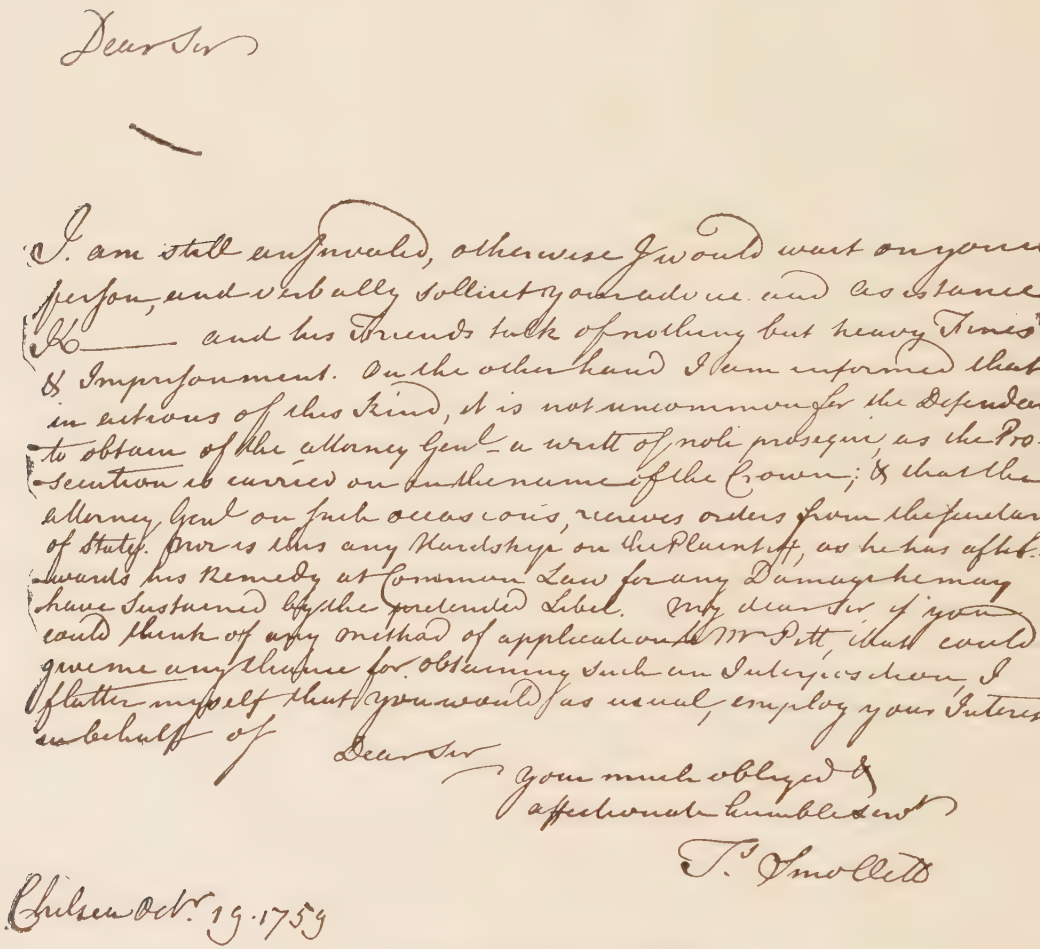


Tobias Smollett

After an Original Portrait painted in Italy about 1770

Tobias George Smollett (1721–1771) was the youngest grandson of Sir James Smollett of Bonhill, in Dumbartonshire, a gentleman of wealth and position. Archibald Smollett, the father of the novelist, was a "ne'er-do-weel," who inhabited a little

house called Dalquhurn, on the Bonhill estate; and there Tobias was born in March 1721. Archibald died in his son's early infancy, and Tobias was brought up by his grandfather. After a short schooling at Dumbarton, he was apprenticed to a medical man at Glasgow. Perhaps during this time he also attended the University, for he certainly acquired some Latin and Greek. We are told that he was "a restive apprentice and a mischievous stripling." In 1739 he came up to London to seek his fortune, with the MS. of his tragedy of *The Regicide* in his pocket; but although he saw



Autograph Letter from Smollett

Lyttelton, he met with no solid encouragement. The war of Jenkins' Ear was just beginning, and Smollett enlisted as surgeon's mate on board a battleship; he took part in the expedition against Carthagena, and gained the experience of life at sea which he used with so much freedom in *Roderick Random*. Disgusted with the inefficiency of the fleet, he withdrew, late in 1740, to Jamaica, where he seems to have married, and where he probably practised as a physician until 1744, when he returned to London and set up as a surgeon in Westminster. Mrs. Smollett, the Narcissa of *Roderick Random*, was left behind in Jamaica until 1747, when she joined her

husband in England. From 1746 to 1748 Smollett made repeated attempts to win attention by publishing pamphlets of poetry, mainly of a satirical character; this was not his line. But early in the last-mentioned year he brought out his novel of *Roderick Random*, which he followed in 1751 by *Peregrine Pickle*, and in 1753 by *Ferdinand, Count Fathom*. He set himself to imitate the method of *Don Quixote* and *Gil Blas*, and he introduced innumerable touches of more or less faithful autobiography. Those books, and particularly the first two, in spite of or perhaps because of their brutal vigour, found instant favour with the public. But Smollett did not abandon his interest in medicine. In 1750 he took his degree of M.D. at Aberdeen; but the life of a physician does not seem to have suited him, and it is more than probable that his eccentric and ferocious manners did not attract patients. He therefore continued to cultivate miscellaneous letters, translating, compiling, and arranging. In 1759 an Admiral Knowles, whose incompetency Smollett had boldly exposed, brought an action for libel against him, and the novelist was fined and imprisoned for three months in the King's Bench. His pedestrian labours in English history brought him in a steady income from 1757 to 1766; the general opinion of the age is summed up by one of Thackeray's characters, who says, "Smollett's history is more dull, but by no means so dangerous as that of Hume." In 1762 he returned to fiction, with the sad failure of *Sir Launcelot Greaves*. Early in 1763 his only daughter, the sole being in the world to whom Smollett was deeply attached, died, and he and his wife left England, in charge of two young ladies of fortune; this enabled them to travel with the comfort demanded by Smollett's health, which was now seriously failing. He travelled through Italy and France without contentment or appreciation until the spring of 1765, and in the following year he published his curious *Travels*, in which he said many things about the landscape and art of Southern Europe which Sterne very wittily remarked ought to have been "reserved for his physician." The worst and least human of his books, the horrid *Adventures of an Atom*, appeared in 1769. But before this Smollett had discovered that the only hope of prolonging his life lay in a flight to the south. In December 1769, therefore, he left England for good, and settled at Monte Nuovo, near Leghorn, which continued to be his home for the rest of his life. Here, in a happy revival of his spirits, he wrote *Humphry Clinker*, which Scott has aptly styled "the last, and, like music

Illustration by Cruikshank to "Peregrine Pickle"

sweetest in the close, the most pleasing of Smollett's books." It was published in 1771, and in September of the same year the author died, only fifty years of age, but already so dry and emaciated that, as he whimsically said, he might have passed for an Egyptian mummy. He was buried in the cemetery at Leghorn, overlooking the sea. Not much has been preserved of the personal history of Smollett, although he lived in the very age of memoirs. He was surly and harsh; he pursued his successful contemporaries with ferocious hostility; he gathered few or no friends about him. He was an honest man and a patriot, but he was wanting in the lovable qualities. He was capable, as Robertson experienced during an interesting interview, of being extremely polished and urbane upon occasion; but he found that, as a rule, the world expected him to resemble the ruffians and bullies that he drew, and he did not care to disappoint so reasonable a supposition.

Illustration by Cruikshank to "Roderick Random"

THE ARRIVAL OF MR. LISMAHAGO (FROM "HUMPHRY CLINKER").

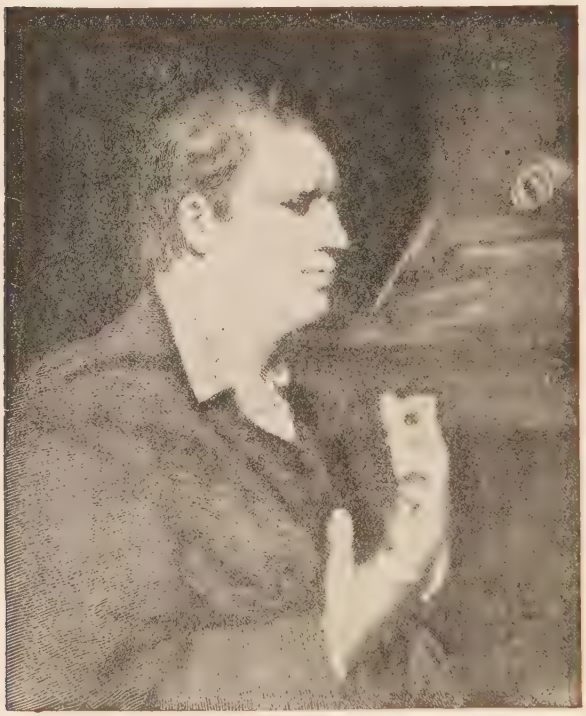
Martin had not been gone half-an-hour, when we were joined by another character, which promised something extraordinary. A tall meagre figure, answering, with his horse, the description of Don Quixote mounted on Rozinante, appeared in the twilight at the inn door, while my aunt and Liddy stood at a window in the dining-room. He wore a coat, the cloth of which had once been scarlet, trimmed with Branderburgs, now totally deprived of their metal, and he had holster-caps and housing of the same stuff and same antiquity. Perceiving ladies at the window above, he endeavoured to dismount with the most graceful air he could assume: but the ostler neglecting to hold the stirrup, when he wheeled off his right foot, and stood with his whole weight on the other, the girth unfortunately gave way, the saddle turned, down came the cavalier on the ground, and his hat and periwig falling off, displayed a head-piece of various colours, patched and plastered in a woeful condition. The ladies, at the window above, shrieked with affright, on the supposition that the stranger had received some notable damage in his fall; but the greatest injury he had sustained arose from the dishonour of his descent, aggravated by the disgrace of exposing the condition of his cranium, for certain plebeians, that were about the door, laughed aloud, in the belief that the captain had got either a scald head, or a broken head, both equally opprobrious. He forthwith leaped up in a fury, and snatching one of his pistols, threatened to put the ostler to death, when another squall from the women checked his resentment. He then bowed to the window, while he kissed the butt-end of his pistol, which he replaced, adjusted his wig in great confusion, and led his horse into the stable.

With the work of these four novelists, whose best thoughts were given to fiction, were associated two or three isolated contributions to the novel, among which the *Vicar of Wakefield* and *Rasselas* are the most celebrated. Neither Johnson nor Goldsmith, however, would have adopted this form, if a direct and highly successful appeal to the public had not already been made by Richardson and Fielding. These masterly books were episodic; they have little importance in our general survey. Nor must we delay to describe the *Peter Wilkins* (1751) of Robert Paltock, with its beautiful

Illustration from Robert Paltock's "Peter Wilkins"

dream of a winged race of Glums and Gawries, nor the eccentric Socinian romance of *John Buncle*, 1756–66, of Thomas Amory, although each of these, in its isolated way, is a minor classic. We judge them as we judge the flood of novels which presently rushed forth in all the languages of Europe, as being the results of a discovery which the world owes to the great English pioneers. The novel, indeed, was the first gift of a prominent kind which the world owed to England. The French boudoir romance, as exemplified by Crébillon *fils*, faded out of existence when Richardson rose over the Continent. The lucidity, directness, and wholesomeness of this new species of fiction made a way for it at once; within a marvellously short space of time all Europe was raving over *Pamela* and *Clarissa*. The anti-

romantic novel swept heroic and picaresque fiction out of the field, and it was the uncommon good fortune of the humdrum old printer to prepare the way for Rousseau and Goethe, to be imitated by Voltaire, and to win the enthusiastic adulation of Diderot and of Marmontel, who preferred *Sir Charles Grandison* to all the masterpieces of antiquity. The type of novel invented in England about 1740–50 continued for sixty or seventy years to be the only model for Continental fiction; and criticism has traced on every French novelist, in particular, the stamp of Richardson, if not of Sterne and Fielding, while the Anglomania of Rousseau is patent to the superficial reader.

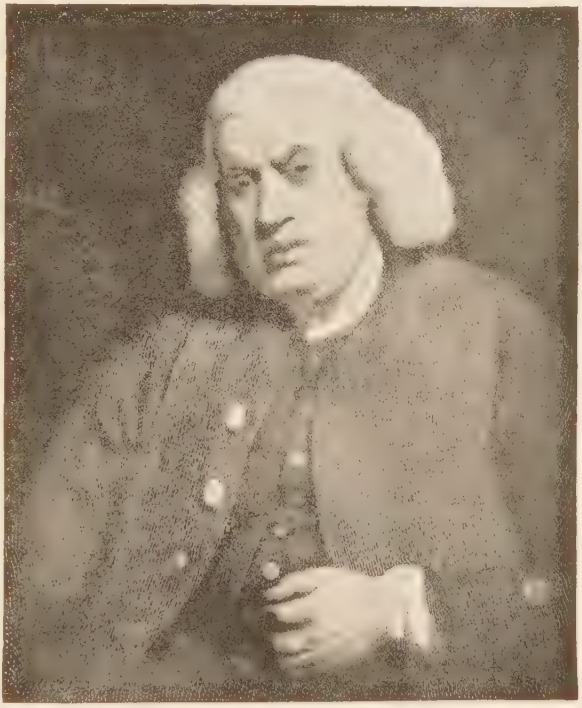


Samuel Johnson

After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

The literature which exercised so wide an influence, and added so greatly to the prestige and vital force of English manners of thought, is not to be disregarded as trivial. The introduction of the novel, indeed, was to intellectual life as epoch-making as the invention of railways was to social life: it added a vast and inexhaustibly rich province to the domain of the imagination. The discovery that a chronicle of events which never happened to people who never existed, may be made, not merely as interesting and probable, but practically as *true* as any record of historical adventure, was one of most far-reaching importance. It was what Fielding called "the prosai-comi-epos" of the age, invented for the ceaseless delight of those who had tasted the new pleasure of seeing themselves as others saw them. The realistic novel was as popular as a bit of looking-glass is among savages. It enabled our delighted forefathers to see what manner of men they were, painted without dazzling or "sub-fusc" hues, in the natural colours of life. For us the pathos of Richardson, the sturdy, manly sense of Fielding, the sensibility of Sterne, the unaffected humanity of Goldsmith, possess a perennial charm, but they cannot be to us quite what they were to those most enviable readers who not merely perused them for the first time, but had never conceived the possibility of seeing anything like them. That fresh eagerness we never can recover.

The complex age illustrated by such poets as Young, and such novelists as Fielding, found its fullest personal exponent in Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, not the greatest writer, indeed, in English literature, but perhaps the most massive figure of a man of letters. The gradual tendency of the century had more and more come to be concentrated upon attention to common sense, and in Johnson a character was developed, of noble intelligence, of true and tender heart, of lambent humour, in whose entire philosophy every impulse was subordinated to that negative virtue. Johnson became, therefore, the leading intellect of the country, because displaying in its quintessence the quality most characteristic of the majority of educated men and women. Common sense gave point to his wit, balance to his morality, a Tory limitation to his intellectual sympathy. He keeps the central path; he is as little indulgent to enthusiasm as to infidelity; he finds as little place in his life for mysticism as for coarse frivolity. *Vita fumus*, and it is not for man to waste his years in trying to weigh the smoke or puff it away; bravely and simply he must labour and acquiesce, without revolt, without speculation, in "all that human hearts endure." This virile hold upon facts, this attitude to conduct as a plain garment from which the last shred of the Shaftesbury gold-lace optimism had been torn, explains the astounding influence Johnson wielded during his lifetime. His contemporaries knew him to be thoroughly honest, profoundly intelligent, and yet permeated by every prejudice of the age. They loved to deal with facts, and no man had so large a stock of them at his disposal as Johnson.



Samuel Johnson

After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

For nearly fifty years Johnson was occupied in literary composition. Yet his books are not so voluminous as such a statement would lead us to expect. It is doubtful whether, with a competency, Johnson would have written at all, for he was ponderously indolent, moving slowly, and easily persuaded to stop, loving much more to read, to ponder, and to talk than to write, and, indeed, during long periods of his career unable to put pen to paper. Of his

principal productions the most famous may be called occasional, for they were written suddenly, under a pressing need for money, in a jet of violent energy which was succeeded by prolonged inertia. He essayed every species of composition, and it cannot be said that he was unsuccessful in any, according to the estimate of the age. His two poems, satires imitated from Juvenal, are less "poetical," perhaps, in the recent sense than any writings of their reputation in the language, but the solidity and sententiousness of th ir couplets kept them moderately popular for more than half a century. As an essayist, it is less fair to judge Johnson by his *Ramblers* than by his lighter and less pompous *Idlers;* yet even the former were till lately habitually read. He lent his dignified and ponderous imagination to the task of producing fiction, and *Rasselas* takes its place among the minor classics of our tongue. Towards the end of his life Johnson came forward four times with a weighty pamphlet as completely outside the range of practical politics as those of Carlyle. He is also the writer of two diaries of travel, of sermons, of a tragedy, of certain critical ana—all of them, in the strict sense, occasional, and almost unprofessional.

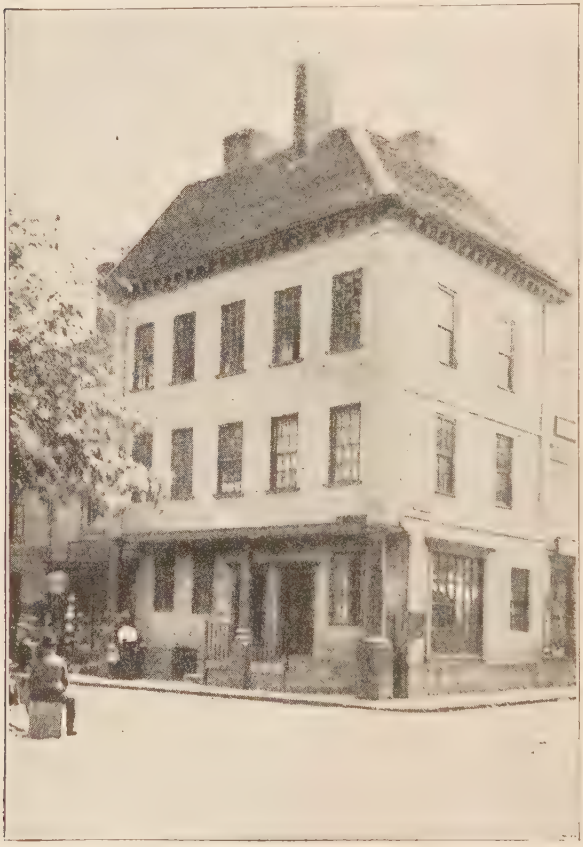
Johnson's House in Inner Temple Lane

The only works on which Johnson can be said to have expended elaborate attention are his *Dictionary*, which scarcely belongs to literature, and his *Lives of the English Poets*. The latter, indeed, is his *magnum opus;* on it, and on it alone, if we except his reported sayings, the reputation of Johnson as a critic rests. This extremely delightful compendium can never cease to please a certain class of readers, those, namely, who desire intellectual stimulus rather than information, and who can endure the

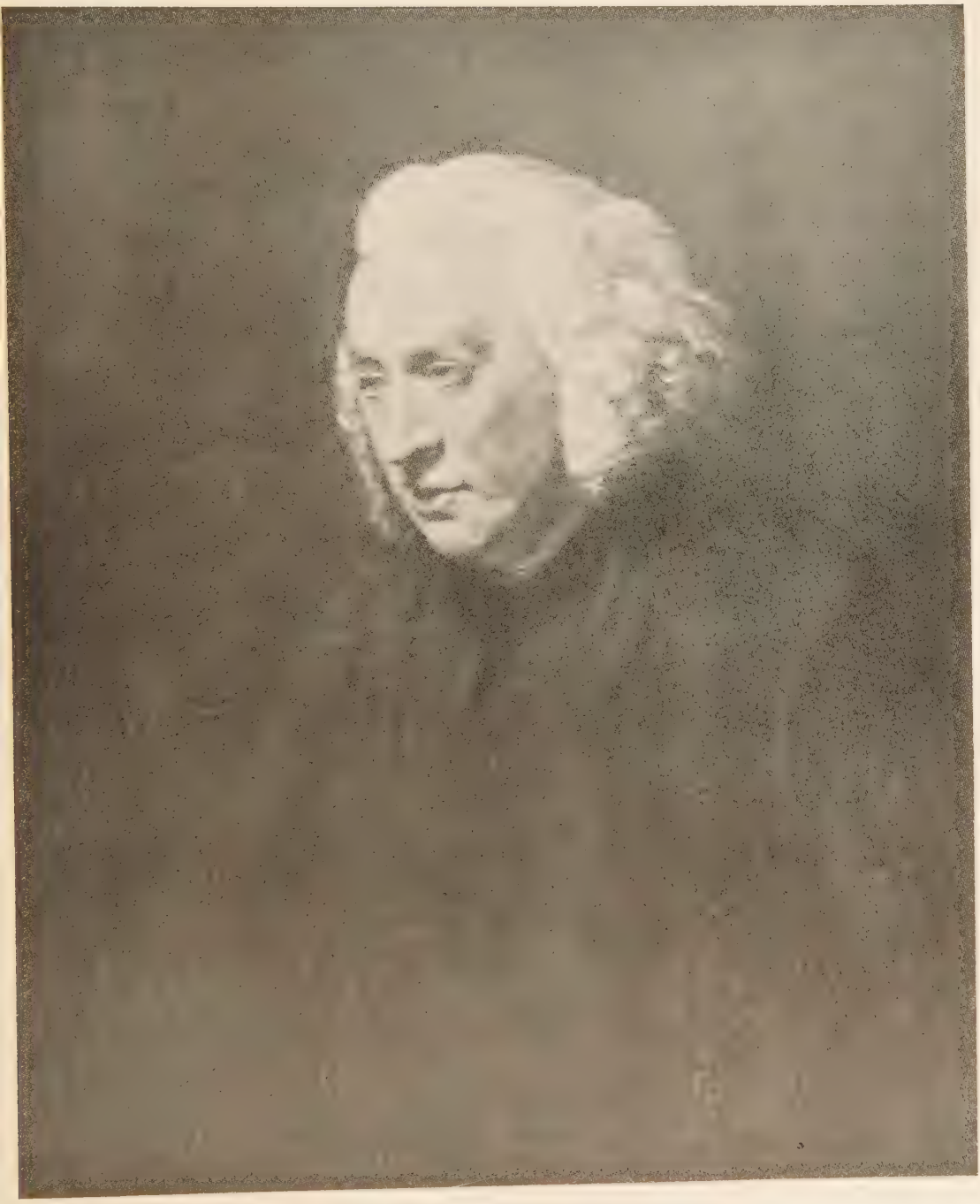
dogmatic expression of an opinion with which they disagree. No one turns to Johnson's pages any longer to know what to think about Milton or Gray; no one any longer considers that Cowley was the first correct English poet, or that Edmund Smith was a great man. Half Johnson's selected poets are read no longer, even by students; many of them never were read at all. Mrs. Browning wittily remarked that "Dr. Johnson wrote the Lives of the Poets,—and left the poets out." What we seek in these delightful volumes is the entertainment to be obtained from the courageous exposition, the gay, bold decisiveness, the humour and humanity of the prodigious critic, self-revealed in his preferences and his prejudices. There are no "perhaps's" and "I think's"; all is peremptory and assertive; you take the judgment or you leave it, and if you venture to make a reservation, the big voice roars you down. This remarkable publication closes the criticism of the century; it is the final word of the movement which had been proceeding since 1660; it sums it up so brilliantly and authoritatively that immediate revolt from its principles was a matter of course. During the very same years Thomas Warton was publishing his *History of English Poetry*, in which all the features were found which Johnson lacked—broad and liberal study, an enthusiasm for romance, a sense of something above and beyond the rules of the critics, a breadth of real poetry undreamed of by Johnson. Warton knew his subject; Johnson did not. Warton prophesied of a dawning age, and Johnson stiffly contented himself with the old. Warton was accurate, painstaking, copious; Johnson was careless, indolent, inaccurate; yet, unfair as it seems, to-day everybody still reads Johnson, and no one opens the pages of Warton.

Johnson's House in Bolt Court, Fleet Street

Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) was the eldest child of Michael Johnson, a bookseller of Lichfield, where the future lexicographer was born on the 18th of September 1709. From infancy he was afflicted with the scrofulous disease known as "king's evil," and in 1712 his mother (Sarah Ford) took him up to London to be "touched" by Queen Anne. It was the last time on which this superstitious performance was gone through. Johnson was sent to a dame's school in Lichfield, and then to the grammar school at Stourbridge. He was a model pupil, and he had read so much of an unusual kind, that when he proceeded to Oxford in December 1728 the Master of Pembroke told him he was "the best qualified for the university that he had ever known come there." Johnson, as is now ascertained, resided little more than a year at Oxford, although he kept his name on the books until 1731. His father died late in 1731, and Johnson found the business in a very reduced condition. He did not attempt, at least for any length of time, to keep on the book-shop; he became an usher in a school at Market Bosworth and other places, and tried to get literary work to do. His first book, a translation of Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia*, was printed anonymously at Birmingham in 1735. At the last-mentioned town he met with a widow, Mrs. Porter, "fat, flaring, and fantastic," whom he married, although she was nearly twice his age; in spite of her eccentricities she made her uncouth husband a good wife—"it was a love match on both sides," he said. The couple set up a school at Edial Hall, Lichfield, where David Garrick was one of their elder pupils. This school was a failure, and Johnson and Garrick came up to London together in 1737 to seek their fortunes. The early days of Johnson in town were deeply acquainted with the "ills which assail the scholar's life"; he was extremely poor, and in 1738 his tragedy *Irene*, on which he had built his hopes, was refused at Drury Lane. He joined the staff of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, however, and made a little money and more fame by his didactic poem of *London*. From 1740 to 1743 Johnson earned a scanty income as a parliamentary reporter; he was living most of this



Johnson's Birthplace at Lichfield



Samuel Johnson.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY JOHN OPIE.

time in a garret in Exeter Street, Strand. He did other hack-work for people like Osborn the bookseller, of his quarrel with whom he afterwards gave Mrs. Thrale a succinct account—"Dearest lady, he was insolent, and I beat him; and he was a blockhead, and told of it." In 1743 that strange adventurer Richard Savage died, and in the following year Johnson published his *Life*. He was still, and for a long time to come, so miserably poor that he often could not show himself in public because of the shabbiness of his clothes. In 1747 he issued his *Plan of a Dictionary*, which he dedicated to Chesterfield, but with scant encouragement. In 1748 he wrote at Hampstead, and in 1749 published, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, a very fine work, which oddly enough failed to please the poetic taste of the day. At length, in February of the same year, the old tragedy of *Irene* was produced by Garrick at Drury Lane, and for the first time in his life Johnson tasted success; he received nearly £300. From

Grammar School at Lichfield

1750 to 1752 he was busily engaged in writing a bi-weekly periodical, *The Rambler*, which appears to have been faintly lucrative; it expired abruptly, probably because Johnson was unable to continue it owing to the condition of his wife, who, after years of "perpetual illness and perpetual opium," died a few days after the last *Rambler* appeared. A blind Welsh lady, Mrs. Williams, became the inmate of his house, and continued to live with him till her death thirty years later. The huge task of the *Dictionary* was completed in 1754, and Johnson received a little money, much reputation, and the degree of M.A. from the University of Oxford His noble letter to Chesterfield, a masterpiece of manly irony, (though not published until 1790) belongs to 1755. But Johnson was now tired; he allowed his small resources soon to become exhausted, and he fell again into extreme indigence. We know little of his life until 1758, when we find him starting a new and more interesting periodical, *The Idler*; it appeared weekly for two years. Johnson's mother died, at the age of ninety, early in 1759, and he wrote his novel of *Rasselas* to pay for her funeral. He had now been living for some years in Gough Square, but he moved over to Staple Inn in March 1759. He made various changes of residence before settling, in 1761, in the

chambers in Inner Temple Lane, which he made so famous. His next labour was the editing of Shakespeare, in which he showed himself dilatory and perfunctory. But in 1762 Johnson had accepted from George III. a pension of £300, which was of immense importance to him, for it raised him above the carking anxiety of indigence, and above necessities of labour, which now, at the age of fifty-three, were intolerably irksome to him. In May 1763 Johnson became acquainted with Boswell, to whose devotion he owes so enormous a debt. He was, indeed, now gathering about him the friends who were the solace and delight of his old age, Goldsmith first, then Langton, Topham Beauclerk, Hawkins, Bathurst, Burke, Reynolds, and the Thrales; "The Club," in which most of these found a place, was formed in 1764. It was the kindness of these friends which was to soothe the next "twenty years of a life radically wretched." The Thrales, in particular, were full of hospitable kindness; he was a cultivated brewer, she, born Hester Lynch Salisbury (1741–1821), a lively young woman of quite unusual clearness of understanding. Johnson, for sixteen years, had a room in their house, at Streatham or at Southwark, always prepared for his arrival. In the autumn of 1765 Johnson's Shakespeare was at length issued in eight volumes to the subscribers, who did not conceal their disappointment; this is the poorest of his productions. Johnson had become languid, and, weary of writing, resolved to do what "good I can by my conversation." He now began to rule the empire of letters by his talk. It was not for five years that he was induced by political zeal to take up the pen again; he wrote several pamphlets, *The False Alarm* (1770), *Falkland's Islands* (1772), and *Taxation no Tyranny* (1775), amongst others. After the age of sixty Johnson's health took a turn for the better, and he was probably never in so little physical distress as when, in the summer of 1773, he had the fortitude not merely to visit Scotland, but to undertake a perilous voyage among the Hebrides. He was encouraged to travel more; in 1774 he went with the Thrales to Wales; in 1775 the same friends took him to France. On his return he was made LL.D. by the University of Oxford; at the age of sixty-six, and not before, he becomes what all the world has learned to call him, Dr. Johnson. His highly comical and sensible controversy with "Ossian" MacPherson dates from this year; Johnson, in redundant spirits, purchased a cudgel, but MacPherson withdrew from the discussion. In these years Boswell's attendance upon his illustrious friend was very close, and we have a remarkably full portrait of Johnson's peculiarities. In 1776 he made the latest of his moves, into No. 8 Bolt Court, where he resided till he died. He had by this time gathered

Samuel Johnson

From an Engraving by Finden

Madam

Among the numerous addresses of condolence which your great loss must have occasioned, be pleased to receive these from one whose name perhaps You have never heard, and to whom your Ladyship is known only by the reputation of your virtues, and to whom your Lord was known only by his kindness and beneficence.

Your Ladyship is now again summoned to exert that piety of which You once gave us a Scene of pain and danger, so illustrious an example, and your Lord's beneficence may be still recommended by those also with his fortune inherit his virtues.

I hope to be forgiven the liberty which I take of informing your Ladyship, that Mr Mauritius Lowe, a Son of your late Lord's Father, had by my recommendation to your Lord, a quarter's allowance of ten pounds, the last of which, was July 26, he was told

received, he was in hourly hope of his second Husband, or Pensioned himself Thrale on October 26, he should have received the whole half-years bounty, when he was struck with the dreadful news of his Benefactor's death.

May I presume to hope that his Widow, his Children, and his Friends, as much exceed his Lordships charity, will continue to bear the same affection unto those whom he has left behind, and that though he has lost one friend he may not yet be destitute. Your Ladyships charity cannot easily be exerted where it is wanted more: and to a mind like yours distress is a sufficient recommendation.

I hope to be allowed the honour of being,

Madam,

Your Ladyships

most humble Servant

Sam: Johnson.

Bolt court, Fleetstreet, London
Sept. 9. 1780

around him quite a group of poor applicants for his charity; at some periods there must have been as many as eight or ten of these queer dependents living in the house; he always treated them "with the same, or perhaps more, ceremonious civility" that he showed to people of fashion. General discontent was expressed at Dr. Johnson's "indolence," and in 1777 he was induced to undertake a literary enterprise of great importance, into which he threw himself with considerable energy. This was the collection of prefaces, now generally known as the *Lives of the English Poets*. These were not completed until 1781, and Johnson was actively employed upon them for four years. Valued friends gradually dropped away in death, first Goldsmith, then Garrick, then Thrale; he felt each of these bereavements bitterly, and his constitution began to break up. In June 1783, after a fatiguing visit to Oxford, he had a severe attack of paralysis, but it passed in a few weeks. His recovery was, however, only temporary, and all through 1784 he was declining. Nevertheless, in the autumn of that year, he contrived to visit Lichfield and some places in Derbyshire. He sank very gradually after his return to London in November, and passed away in perfect serenity on the 13th of December, after saying, "God bless you, my dear," to the beautiful Miss Morris, who came to bid him farewell. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and the pall was carried amongst others, by Burke and Bennet Langton. The character of Johnson was courageous, sincere, and manly to a remarkable, almost to a typical, degree, and he was animated by a positive passion of human charity. He had many peculiarities, the picturesqueness of which has perhaps been exaggerated, but which have combined to make him one of the most striking figures in English history. His rolling walk, the twisting and flinging of his great unwieldy limbs, the scars on his face, the homeliness of his brown clothes and bluish wig, his loud voice and incessant animation of gesture—all these things have combined, under the hand of Boswell, to form a portrait which no one ever forgets. Johnson's conversation seems to have been not merely the most remarkable of his own age, but among the very finest of which any record has been preserved. Formidable and exhilarating in the extreme, the talk of Johnson, with its rapidity of movement, its surprises, its splendour of illustration, its weight of authority, and its sparkle of humour, was one of the main intellectual features of the middle of the eighteenth century.

Dr. Johnson in his Hebridean Costume

FROM "RASSELAS."

Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope, who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow, attend to the history of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.

Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty Emperor in whose dominions the father of waters begins his course—whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over the world the harvests of Egypt.

According to the custom which has descended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Rasselas was confined in a private palace, with the other sons and daughters of Abyssinian royalty, till the order of succession should call him to the throne.

The place where the wisdom or policy of antiquity had destined for the residence of the Abyssinian princes was a spacious valley in the Kingdom of Amhara, surrounded on every side by mountains, of which the summit overhung the middle part. The only passage by which it could be entered was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it had long been disputed whether it was the work of nature or of human industry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth which opened into the valley was closed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massive that no man, without the help of engines, could open or shut them.

James Boswell

From an Engraving of the "Houghton" Portrait

FROM THE "LETTER TO LORD CHESTERFIELD."

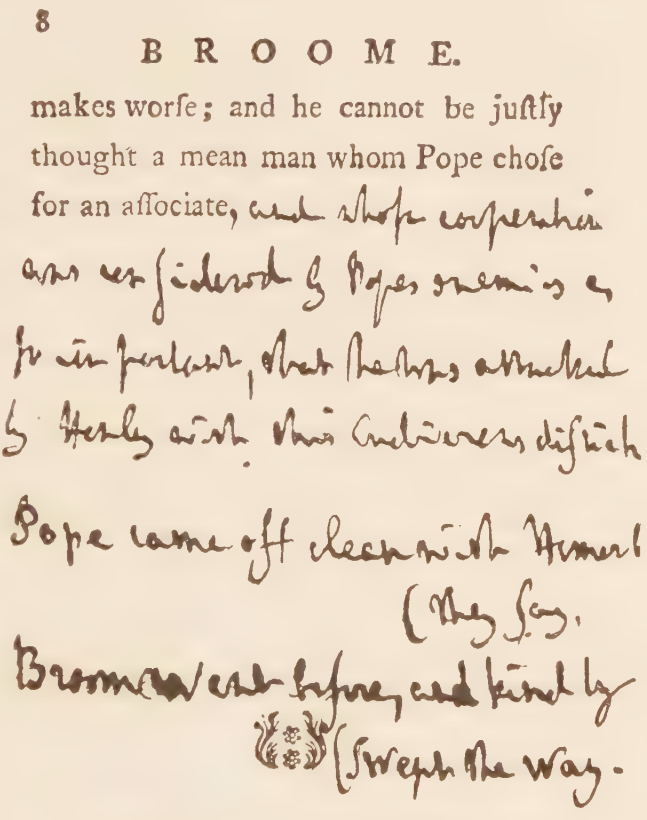
Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil became at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed until I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it: till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations when no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which providence has enabled me to do for myself.

The extraordinary vitality of Johnson is one of the most interesting phenomena in literary history. That the greater part of it did not exhale with the fading memory of his friends is due to the genius of his principal disciple. It has been customary to deny capacity of every kind to JAMES BOSWELL, who had, indeed, several of the characteristics of a fool; but the qualities which render the *Life of Johnson* one of the great books of the world are

not accidental, and it would be an equal injustice to consider them inherent in the subject. The life and letters of Gray, which Mason had published in 1775, gave Boswell a model for his form, but it was a model which he excelled in every feature. By Mason and Boswell a species of literature was introduced into England which was destined to enjoy a popularity that never stood higher than it does at this moment. Biographies had up to this time been perfunctory affairs, either trivial and unessential collections of anecdotes, or else pompous eulogies from which the breath of life was absent. But Mason and Boswell made their heroes paint their own portraits, by the skilful interpolation of letters, by the use of anecdotes, by the manipulation of the recollections of others; they adapted to biography the newly discovered formulas of the anti-romantic novelists, and aimed at the production of a figure that should be interesting, lifelike, and true.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BROOME.

makes worſe; and he cannot be juſtly thought a mean man whom Pope choſe for an aſſociate, and whoſe converſation was conſidered by Pope himſelf as an improvement, that Shakſpeare attended by Heſſy with their Gentlemen diſtich

Pope came off clear with Homer
(they ſay.
Broome went before, and kind by
Sweeth the Way.

Page of Corrected Proof of Johnson's "Lives"

It was a very happy accident which made Dr. Johnson the subject of the first successful essay in this species of portraiture. Boswell was a consummate artist, but his sitter gave him a superb opportunity. For the first time, perhaps, in the history of literature, a great leader of intellectual society was able after his death to carry on, unabated, and even heightened, the tyrannous ascendency of his living mind. The picturesqueness of Johnson's dictatorial personage, his odd freaks and pranks, his clearness of speech, his majestic independence of opinion, went on exercising their influence long after his death, and exercise it now. Still in the matchless pages of Boswell we see a living Johnson, blowing out his breath like a whale, whistling and clucking under the arguments of an opponent, rolling victoriously in his chair, often "a good deal exhausted by violence and vociferation." Never before had the salient points in the character and habits of a man of genius been noted with

anything approaching to this exactitude and copiousness, and we ought to be grateful to Boswell for a new species of enjoyment.

James Boswell (1740–1795), the son of a Scotch judge and the heir to a good Lowland estate, was born at Auchinleck on the 29th of October 1740. He was educated for the bar at Edinburgh and Glasgow, and came up to London in 1760. His career in letters opened with some poor poetry. From boyhood he had formed an intense admiration for Johnson, and endeavoured to meet him directly he arrived

Samuel Johnson and James Boswell

From a Caricature by Thomas Rowlandson

WALKING UP THE HIGH STREET.

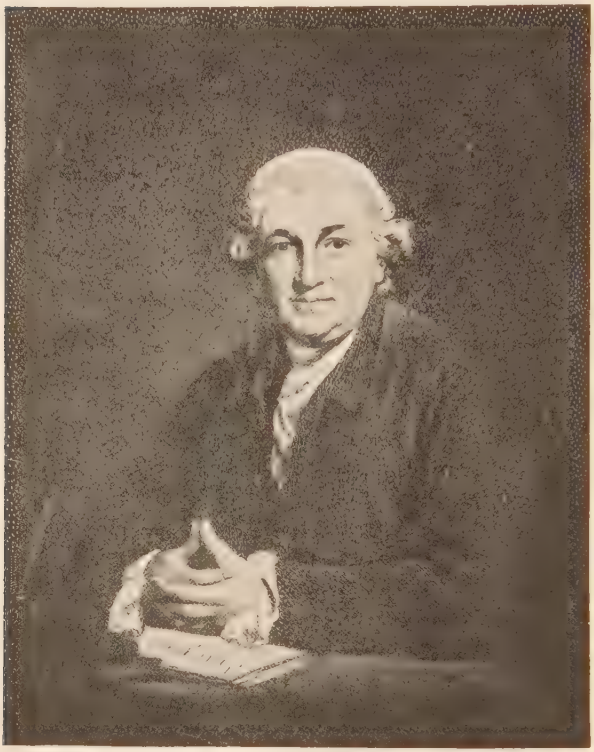
"*Mr. Johnson and I walked Arm in Arm up the High Street to my House in James Court: it was a dusky night. I could not prevent his being assailed by the Evening effluvia of Edinburgh*——
"*As we marched along he grumbled in my Ear, 'I smell you in the dark.'*"—Vide Journal, p. 13.

in England. It was not, however, until the 16th of May 1763, when he was twenty-two, that Boswell was presented to the great man by Davies the bookseller. He began, almost immediately, to study and to note down Johnson's conversation. But he could not, at this time, give Johnson his undivided attention. He was living in Germany in 1764, in Italy and Holland in 1765, and in Scotland until 1768, when he came up to London to publish his curious *Account of Corsica*. He now began to keep a close record of Johnson's doings and sayings, and from 1772 to Johnson's death the intimacy of the oddly-assorted pair of friends was unbroken. He was not at pains to make

James Boswell

After the Portrait by George Dance

himself equally beloved by all the great man's acquaintances. He was jealous of Goldsmith and ungenerous to Mrs. Thrale, and he forced Wilkes upon them much against their inclination. He was not an original member of "The Club," and Johnson had difficulty in contriving his election. Boswell, in short, was looked upon as an interloper. His measureless devotion to Johnson, however, his good nature, and his total lack of pride carried him through. He could not be checked or snubbed; if he was crushed, he popped up again with imperturbable enthusiasm, and in all companies his face was fixed on Johnson's like a sunflower on the sun. In the autumn of 1773 he had the luck to persuade Johnson to accompany him to the Hebrides. In 1775 he began to keep his terms at the Inner Temple, and next year he came into the Auchinleck estate, although his father was still alive. The death of Johnson in 1784 was an epoch in the life of Boswell. He set himself at once to arrange the materials which he had so long collected, but he was in no hurry to produce them. He permitted other writers to dash forward with premature Lives of Johnson — Cooke in 1784, Shaw in 1785, Mrs. Thrale in 1786, Hawkins in 1787; he waited in absolute confidence that the appearance of his two volumes would relegate all these audacious predecessors to an instant oblivion. He was quite right; his *Life of Johnson*, when it at length appeared in 1791, was hailed as the most interesting biography ever published, and it holds that position still after more than a hundred years. The rest of Boswell's career was insignificant. He was made Recorder of Carlisle; but he continued to reside and practise in the Temple. He died on the 19th of May 1795, and was buried at Auchinleck.



David Garrick
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Mrs. Thrale
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

FROM THE "LIFE OF DR. JOHNSON."

He had another particularity of which none of his friends ever ventured to ask an explanation. It appeared to me some superstitious habit, which he had contracted early and from which he had never called upon his reason to disentangle him. This was his anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage, by a certain number of steps from a certain point, or at least so that either his right or his left foot (I am not certain which) should constantly make the first actual movement when he came close to the door or passage. Thus I conjecture: for I have, upon innumerable occasions, observed him suddenly stop, and then seem to count his steps with a deep earnestness; and when he had neglected or gone wrong in this sort of magical movement, I have seen him go back again, put himself in a proper posture to begin the ceremony, and, having gone through it, break from his abstraction, walk briskly on, and join his companion.

That the most minute singularities which belonged to him, and made very observable parts of his appearance and manner, may not be omitted, it is requisite to mention that while talking or even musing as he sat in his chair, he commonly held his head to one side towards his right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner, moving his body backward and forward, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating, he made various sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving half a whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen,

I have had a flow of spirits, and have written above a hundred and fifty lines of my Epistle to Lyon. I am in hopes it will be a Piece that may do us both some honour.

I set out for Paris in a week hence. My Father is ill and anxious to see me. If I do not hear that he is better, my stay in France at this time must be very short. Pray write to me immediately at Lyons, by the address which you will find on the opposite page. It will please me to be thus met by you on my road to Paris. Adieu Dear Sir

James Boswell.

Extract from a Letter of Boswell's to John Wilkes

and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly under his breath, *too, too, too;* all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile.

Oliver Goldsmith.

By the side of Johnson, like an antelope accompanying an elephant, we observe the beautiful figure of OLIVER GOLDSMITH. In spite of Johnson's ascendency, and in spite of a friendship that was touching in its nearness, scarcely a trace of the elder companion is to be discovered in the work of the younger. Johnson's style is massive, sonorous, ponderous; enamoured of the pomp of language, he employs its heaviest artillery for trifles, and points his cannon at the partridge on the mountains. The word which Johnson uses is always the correct one so far as meaning goes, but it is often more weighty than the occasion demands, and more Latin. Hence it was, no doubt, that his spoken word, being more racy and more Saxon, was often more forcible than his printed word. There is no ponderosity about Goldsmith, whose limpid and elegant simplicity of style defies analysis. In that mechanical and dusty age he did not set up to be an innovator. We search in vain, in Goldsmith's verse or prose, for any indication of a consciousness of the coming change. He was perfectly contented with the classical traditions, but his inborn grace and delicacy of temper made him select the sweeter and the more elegant among the elements of his time. As a writer, purely, he is far more enjoyable than Johnson; he was a poet of great flexibility and sensitiveness; his single novel is much fuller of humour and nature than the stiff *Rasselas;* as a dramatist he succeeded brilliantly in an age of failures; he is one of the most perfect of essayists. Nevertheless, with all his perennial charm, Goldsmith, in his innocent simplicity, does not attract the historic eye

Oliver Goldsmith

From a Caricature by Bunbury

Sir.

Recd in Jan? 1759

I know of no misery but a gaol to which my own imprudences and your Letter seem to point. I have seen it inevitable this three or four weeks, and by heavens, request it as a favour, as a favour that may prevent somewhat more fatal. I have been some years struggling with a wretched being, with all that contempt which indigence brings with it with all those strong passions which make contempt insupportable. What then has a gaol that is formidable, I shall at least have the society of wretches, and such is to me true society. I tell you again, and again I am now neither able nor willing to pay you a farthing, but I will be punctual to any appointment you or the taylor shall make; thus far at least I do not act the sharper, since unable to pay my debts one way I would willingly give some security another. No sir, had I been a sharper, had I been possessed of less good nature and native generosity I might surely now have been in better circumstances. I am guilty I own of meanesses which poverty unavoidably brings with it; my reflections are filled with repentance for my imprudence but not with any remorse for being a villain, that may be a character you unjustly charge me with. Your books I can assure you are neither pawnd nor sold, but in the custody of a friend ~~from~~ from whom my necessities obliged me to borrow some money whatever becomes of my person, you shall have them in a month. It is very possible both the reports you have heard and your own suggestions may have brought you false information with respect to my character it is very possible that the man whom you now regard

with execration may inwardly burn with grateful resentment, it is very possible that upon a second perusal of the Letter I sent you, you may see the workings of a mind strongly agitated with gratitude and jealousy, if such circumstances should appear at first sight invective 'till my book with Mr. Dodsley shall be published, and then perhaps you may see the bright side of a mind when my professions shall not appear the dictates of necessity but of choice. You seem to think Doctor Milner knew me not. Perhaps so; but he was a man I shall ever honour; but I have friendship only with the dead! I ask pardon for taking up so much time nor shall I add to it by any other professions than that I am Sir your Humble Servt

Oliver Goldsmith.

P. S. I shall expect impatiently the result of your resolutions.

as the good giant Johnson does, seated for forty years in the undisputed throne of letters.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774) was the youngest of the five children of the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, curate of Pallas in County Longford, where he was born on the 10th of November 1728. When he was two years old his father was made rector of Kilkenny West, and took a house in the village of Lissoy. To his early teachers, the boy Oliver seemed "impenetrably stupid." At Ardagh, in his boyish days, he had the adventure on which the plot of *She Stoops to Conquer* was afterwards founded. In June 1744 he entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar; his university life was extremely un-illustrious, and he spent much of it in "perpetually lounging about the college gate." After running away and being nearly starved in 1747, he settled down to work a little, and took his B.A. in 1749. Goldsmith was now urged by his family to take orders; after he had idly prepared for this unwelcome step for some two years, he was rejected by the Bishop of Elphin. He tried to be a tutor, to emigrate to America, to be a law-student; at last, in 1752, he went to Edinburgh to train for medicine. In 1753 he started for the Continent, and seems to have studied at Leyden for two years. In 1755 he wandered off upon his travels, having obtained—it is alleged—a medical degree at Louvain. He begged, fiddled, and wheedled his way all over the West of Europe through 1755, and returned to Dover, with "no more than a few halfpence," in February of the following year. His struggles to make a living were pathetic; he was an apothecary's assistant, a low comedian, an usher in a country school, finally "a physician in a humble way" in Southwark. About 1756 he had the good fortune to meet Samuel Richardson, who employed him as a press-corrector, and probably first led his thoughts to literature as a profession. He next, however, consented to assist a schoolmaster at Peckham, where he became acquainted with Griffiths the publisher, who gave him employment on the *Monthly Review*. In 1758 Goldsmith, under the pseudonym of James Willington, printed his first book, *Memoirs of a Protestant*, translated from the French of Marteilhe. Soon after this he obtained, but did not take up, a medical appointment to Coromandel. He was afterwards rejected at Surgeons' Hall as hospital mate. He was now thirty, and "eight years of disappointment, anguish, and study had worn him down." He lodged for five months over Griffiths' shop in Paternoster Row; about September 1757 he moved into a garret near Salisbury Square. Then—after

Goldsmith's Lodgings in Green Arbour Court

retiring to Peckham for a while—he took lodgings in Green Arbour Court; here in 1759 he produced the *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, his earliest original book. The publication of this little work introduced Goldsmith to the booksellers, and he began to contribute prose and verse to several periodicals. From the miscellaneous labour which gradually made him prominent, there stands out *The Citizen of the World*, which was published in 1762. About this time Goldsmith's acquaintance with Johnson began, and his fame also, for Johnson immediately perceived the genius of this obscure and painful hack-writer; "Dr. Goldsmith," he said, "is one of the first men we now have as an author." He soon justified his friend's judgment, for *The Traveller* in 1764 placed him in the front rank of the poets of the day, and enjoyed instant and substantial success.[1] Goldsmith collected his *Essays* in 1765, and, appearing in purple silk small-clothes and a scarlet roquelaure, endeavoured to resume his labours as a physician, but he did not contrive to secure a practice, and returned to literature. As far back as 1762 Johnson had carried off and sold for the author's benefit, a novel which appeared at length, in 1766, as *The Vicar of Wakefield;* this was recognised as a masterpiece immediately. The author, nevertheless, indolently returned to that miscellaneous scribbling which barely supported him with food and the gay clothes in which he delighted. By the close of 1767, however, he had in rehearsal at Covent Garden a comedy, *The Good Natur'd Man*, which was brought out in January following, and enjoyed a partial success. Goldsmith was present at the first performance "in a suit of Tyrian bloom, satin grain, and garter-blue silk breeches," but afterwards burst out a-crying because one low scene with bailiffs was hissed; he made, however, £500 by this comedy. He thought the sum inexhaustible, and he moved into Brick Court, Middle Temple, where he furnished a set of chambers luxuriously. At the same time

THE

VICAR

OF

WAKEFIELD:

A TALE.

Supposed to be written by HIMSELF.

Sperate miseri, cavete felices.

VOL. I.

SALISBURY:
Printed by B. COLLINS,
For F. NEWBERY, in Pater Noster-Row, London.
MDCCLXVI.

[1] In 1902 a curious first draft of this poem, entitled *A Prospect of Society*, and bearing no date, was discovered by Mr. Bertram Dobell.

Oliver Goldsmith.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY A PUPIL OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

he was beginning the series of lively school-books—*Animated Nature*, *Roman History*, and *History of England*—which were to enjoy so constant a popularity. Thus engaged, he reached the year 1770, when his poem of *The Deserted Village* appeared. He then went off to Paris with Mrs. Horneck and her lovely daughter, "the Jessamy Bride." There is not much more to chronicle in the life of Goldsmith, except the charming incidents of his friendship with Johnson and Reynolds, and the production of *She Stoops to Conquer* in March 1773. His last poem, *Retaliation*, seems to have been written in February 1774, but before it could be printed the poet was gone. He suffered from a local disorder, and though being treated by a skilful physician, insisted on taking a quack medicine, under the influence of which he sank, in his chambers at Brick Court, on the 4th of April 1774. He was buried in the churchyard of the Temple, but Johnson wrote for Westminster Abbey a celebrated and splendid epitaph. His charming poem, *The Haunch of Venison*, was published posthumously in 1776. Goldsmith died in debt, and his fever, it was believed, was exasperated by anxiety. "But," as Johnson said, "let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man." It was his nature to swing between the extremes of poverty and extravagance, and he could never have been "comfortably off." From a lad, and to the end, he had a singular passion for brilliant and expensive clothes. Goldsmith was candour itself, and could no more conceal his vanity, envy, and levity than he could his generosity, enthusiasm, and sweetness of temper. He had great simplicity, and none of those artifices by which men protect themselves from the censure of the world. When all his faults are told, he was the most lovable of men.

Olivia ill-used by the Landlady

From "The Vicar of Wakefield." Edition 1780.

From "The Vicar of Wakefield."

My wife and daughters, happening to return a visit to neighbour Flamborough's, found that family had lately got their pictures drawn by a limner, who travelled the country and took likenesses for fifteen shillings a head. As this family and ours had long a sort of rivalry in point of taste, our spirit took the alarm at this stolen march upon us, and, notwithstanding all I could say, and I said much, it was resolved that we should have our pictures done too. Having therefore engaged the limner,—for what could I do?—our next deliberation was to show the superiority of our taste in the attitudes. As for our neighbour's family, there were seven of them; and they were drawn with seven oranges, a thing quite out of taste, no variety in life, no composition in the world. We desired to

have something in a brighter style, and after many debates at length came to a unanimous resolution of being drawn together, in one large historical family piece. This would be cheaper, since one frame would serve for all, and it would be infinitely more genteel: for all families of any taste were now drawn in the same manner. As we did not immediately recollect an historical subject to hit us, we were contented each with being drawn as independent historical figures. My wife desired to be represented as Venus, and the painter was desired not to be too frugal of his diamonds in her stomacher and hair. Her two little ones were to be as Cupids by her side; while I, in my gown and band, was to present her with my books on the Whistonian controversy. Olivia would be drawn as an Amazon, sitting upon a bank of flowers, dressed in a green Joseph, richly laced with gold, and a whip in her hand. Sophia was to be a shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter could put in for nothing; and Moses was to be dressed out with an hat and white feather. Our taste so much pleased the Squire that he insisted on being put in as one of the family, in the character of Alexander the Great, at Olivia's feet. This was considered by us all as an indication of his desire to be introduced into the family; nor could we refuse his request.

Illustration by Stothard to "The Vicar of Wakefield"

The Emigrants

Illustration by Stothard to "The Deserted Village"

The Deists.

Through the first half of the eighteenth century, those who speculated with any freedom on the principles of religion and on its relation to conduct were loosely classed together as deists. In its general denunciation of independent thought, the age made no distinction between the optimistic rationalists, who proceeded from Shaftesbury, and philosophic scepticism of a critical or even destructive kind. Those who approach the subject from

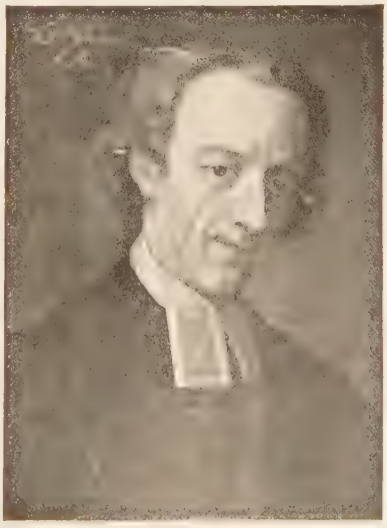
The Social Evening.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROWLANDSON FOR "THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD."

the purely literary standpoint, as we do in these pages, are in danger of underrating the intellectual importance of this undermining of faith, because it was conducted by men whose talent and whose command of style were insufficient to preserve their writings. On the other hand, all the most eminent and vital authors combine to deride and malign the deists and to persuade us of their insignificance. When we see Swift, in his magnificent irony, descend like an eagle upon such an intellectual shrewmouse as Collins, whose principal modern advocate describes him as "always slipshod in style and argument, and tedious in spite of his brevity," we think the contest too unequal to be interesting. Nor does a rapid literary survey afford us occasion to dilate on such very hackney writers as Toland and Tindal, Whiston and Chubb.

Matthew Tindal
After the Portrait by B. Dandridge

The lives of the deists were generally obscure and sometimes dishonoured. Society looked down upon them with a contempt that was occasionally deserved. **John Toland** (1670–1722) was practically hunted out of England for free-thinking, in spite of the encouragement of Locke, and afterwards of Shaftesbury. He was driven to the life of a hackney author. **Matthew Tindal** (1653–1733) was an object of aversion to the authorities of Oxford, where he spent the greater part of his life as a Fellow of All Souls'. He made the High Church party the object of his unceasing attacks, and was rewarded with the reputation of a glutton and a debauchee. In **William Whiston** (1667–1752) we meet with a more learned mind and a more attractive person. His autobiography reveals him, as Sir Leslie Stephen has pointed out, as a sort of Vicar of Wakefield. He lectured on scientific subjects with great



William Whiston
After the Portrait by Mrs. Hoadley

pertinacity, and his lenient views on prophecy and inspiration scandalised those more thoroughgoing sceptics, **Thomas Chubb** (1679–1747) and **Anthony Collins** (1676–1729). The latter was the most daring of all the deists, and the most vehemently attacked. It was he who was willing to admit, by a vast concession, that St. Paul was "a man of sense and a gentleman." All these authors claimed intellectual descent from Locke, who would have repudiated the paternity.

The Historians

Towards the middle of the century, however, the habit of mind engendered by the humble, but sometimes entirely sincere, destructive deists, bore fruit in a species of literature which they had not dreamed of. There can be little question that the progress of critical speculation, the tendency to take obvious things for granted no longer, but to discuss their phenomena and distinguish their bases, led to the happiest results in the province of history. To the period which we have now reached belong three historians of high rank—all three, as it was long believed, of the very highest rank—Hume, Robertson, Gibbon. If modern taste no longer places the first two of these in quite so exalted a position as the eighteenth century did, each, at any rate, so far surpassed any previous rival as to be considered in another class. In the trio we do not hesitate to recognise the pioneers of a new kind of literature, the earliest scientific historians of the English school. Till 1753, history in England had meant no more than the compilation of memoirs; it was now to be a branch of creative literature, carefully constructed and subjected to wholesome criticism.

David Hume.

The eldest of these historians, DAVID HUME, began by the publication of philosophical treatises and passed on to be an essayist in a broader and less technical field. His studies in the British constitution and his inquiries into political precedents led him gradually to attempt a History of Great Britain from the Union to his own day. The volume containing *James I. and Charles I.* produced an extraordinary sensation. Hume's long practice in philosophy had prepared him to excel in the specious presentment of facts, and the point of view which he chose to adopt was novel, and calculated to excite a great deal of discussion. His book was read with as much avidity as a novel by Richardson or Fielding—a result which was aided by the simplicity and elegance of his style, which proceeds, limpid, manly, and serene, without a trace of effort. The *History* was concluded by a sixth volume in 1762, and Hume lived on for fourteen years more, dying in the enjoyment of an uncontested fame, as the greatest of modern historians.

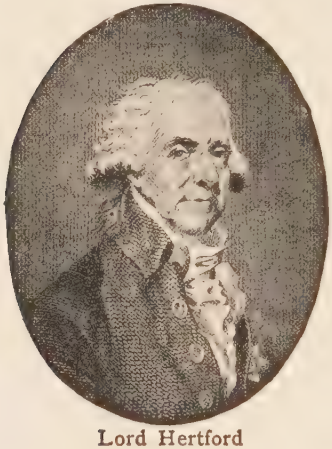
This position it would be absurd to say that he has maintained. Hume had little of the more recently developed conscientiousness about the use of materials. If he found a statement quoted, he would indolently adopt it without troubling to refer to the original document. He was willing to make lavish use of the collections of Thomas Carte (1686–1754), a laborious and unfortunate predecessor of his, whose Jacobite prejudices had concealed his considerable pretensions as an historical compiler. Carte died just when Hume's first volume appeared, and this fact perhaps saved Hume from some unpleasant animadversions. Modern critics have shown that Hume's pages

swarm with inaccuracies, and that, what is a worse fault, his predilections for Tory ideas led him to do wilful injustice to the opponents of arbitrary power. All this, however, is little to the point; Hume is no longer appealed to as an authority. He is read for his lucid and beautiful English, for the skill with which he marshals vast trains of events before the mental eye, for his almost theatrical force in describing the evolution of a crisis. If we compare his work from this point of view with all that had preceded it in English literature, we shall see how eminent is the innovation we owe to Hume. He first made history readable.

David Hume (1711–1776) was the second son and third child of a small Scotch laird, Joseph Hume or Home, of Ninewells in Berwickshire, at the very edge of England; but he was born, on the 26th of April 1711, in Edinburgh. During his infancy his father died, and his mother, "a woman of singular merit," brought up her three children as well as she might at Ninewells. David Hume showed no precocity of intelligence, and his mother described him as "a fine, good-natured creature, but uncommon weak-minded." Nothing definite is known about his education. Between the ages of fifteen and twenty-three he seems to have lived in apparent idleness at Ninewells, but he was already a deep student of the classics, and was meditating a revolution in moral philosophy. In 1734 he went over to France, and resided there three years, mainly among the Jesuits at La Flèche. Here he wrote the *Treatise of Human Nature*, his first work, which remained unpublished, however, until 1739. Two years before this Hume had returned to Ninewells, where he buried himself for several years in study and in philosophical composition. His *Essays, Moral and Political*, appeared anonymously in Edinburgh in 1741 and 1742. Although his name was not given to the public, his writings began to be appreciated by men like Hutcheson, Butler, and the precocious Adam Smith. It is difficult to understand, however, in what mode the little ancestral estate in Berwickshire was made to produce a livelihood for the Hume family; it became imperative at last that David should do something to earn money. Hence, at the age of thirty-four, he consented to become tutor to an imbecile and mean young nobleman, the Marquis of Annandale. Hume bore

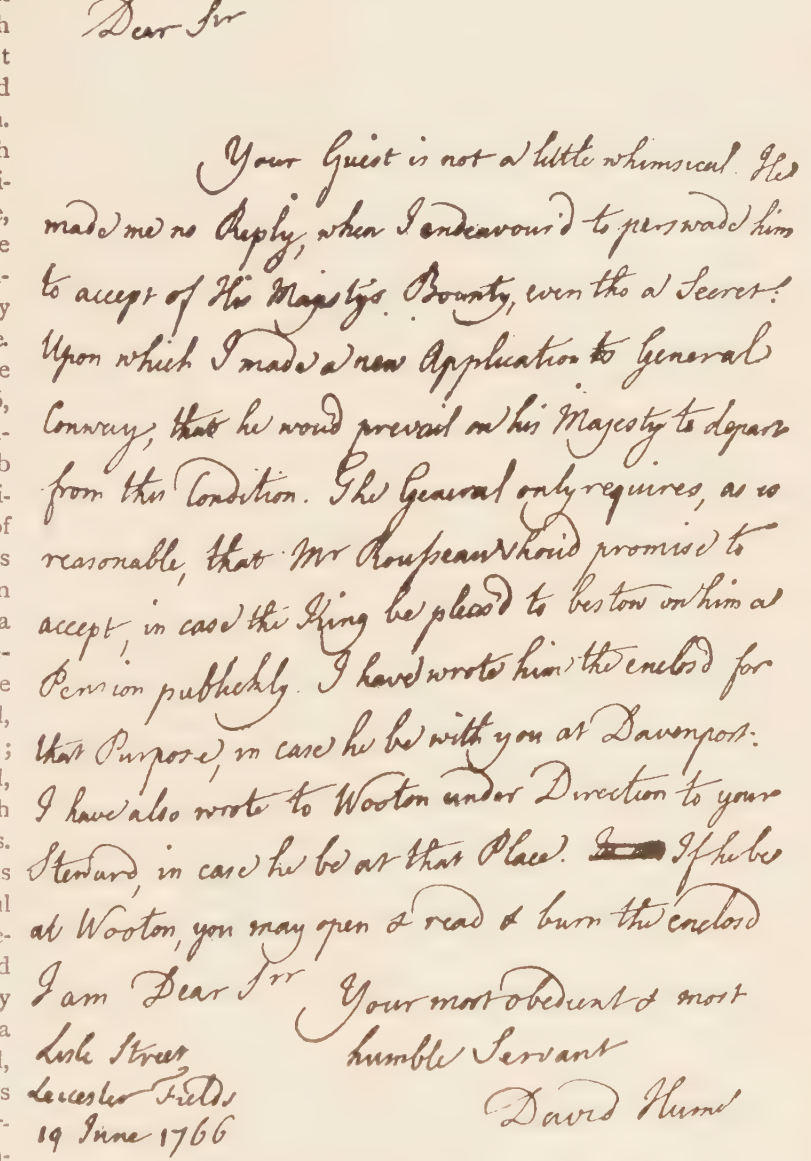
David Hume
After the Portrait by James Ramsay

this bondage for twelve months, and then threw it up to become secretary to General St. Clair, whom he accompanied on the disastrous expedition to L'Orient. Two years later the same general took Hume with him on his embassy to Austria and Italy. Hume was seen at Turin in 1748, "disguised in scarlet" and wearing his uniform "like a grocer of the train-bands"; his could never have been a military figure. While he was in Italy his *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding* were published. He returned to England in 1749, to be met by the news of his mother's death; he rejoined his brother and sister at Ninewells for three more noiseless years, and devoted himself to composition. His *Enquiry concerning Morals* appeared in 1751, and his *Political Discourses* in 1752. His *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, although withheld from the press until 1779, belong to this period. Hume was now famous; he described himself, in 1751, as possessing, besides a competency, "order, frugality, a strong sense of independency, good health, a contented humour, and an unabated love of study." He determined to move with his sister into Edinburgh, and accordingly he took a great house in the Lawnmarket. He presently began "a work which will occupy me several years, and which yields me much satisfaction. 'Tis a History of Britain from the Union of the Crowns to the present time." In January 1752 Hume was elected Librarian to the Advocates, and the outcry caused by this modest appointment shows that the charge of infidelity had already been raised against him. The ladies, however, were violently Hume's partisans, and one of them "broke off all commerce with her lover because he voted against" the philosopher. The collected edition of his *Essays and Treatises*, in four volumes, increased Hume's popularity in 1753 and 1754, and in the latter year the first volume of the *History of Great Britain* appeared. Curiously enough, although it was widely read from the first, it was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation. When this outburst of fanatical criticism subsided the sale became very large, and the second volume, in 1756, was still more favourably received. Hume's famous *Natural History of Religion* was published in 1757, and he now resigned his post as the Advocates' Librarian, that he might devote himself without interruption to literature. He was living quietly in London during the greater part of 1758 and 1759, and in Edinburgh again until 1763. Lord Hertford then persuaded him to accompany him as secretary on his embassy to Paris, where Hume was received with enthusiasm; very comical accounts of his behaviour under the process of lionising were given by Lord Charlemont and Madame d'Epinay. He gave great satisfaction to Lord Hertford, who secured him a pension of £400 a year, and in January 1766 Hume returned to London, bringing Rousseau with him. In 1767 he became Under-Secretary of State, a post which he held long enough to be able to retire to Edinburgh in August 1769 with a pension of £1000 a year, and to build a house in a new street which has ever since borne in his honour the name of "St. David's." He occupied himself in adding slowly to his History, and in "softening and expunging many villainous seditious Whig strokes which had crept into it," for



Lord Hertford
From an Engraving

Hume was growing a passionate Tory in his old age. He retained his good-humour and an uncommon degree of cheerful health until 1775, when he began to suffer from an internal hæmorrhage, which exhausted him, but happily was attended by very little pain. He met death with extraordinary simplicity and courage, ardent and gay to the last, without repining, as one totally detached from life. The end came on the 25th of August 1776, and his body, followed by a great mob of all that constituted the society of Edinburgh, was buried on the Calton Hill. Hume was a very fat and somewhat clumsy little man, with "a broad, unmeaning face"; he never married, although much courted by the ladies. His character was serene and cheerful to an eminent degree; he was looked upon with horror by the orthodox as a dangerous infidel, but in truth he was exactly what he merrily described himself as being — a sober, discreet, virtuous, regular, quiet, good-natured man of a bad reputation.



Dear Sir

Your Guest is not a little whimsical. He made me no Reply, when I endeavour'd to perswade him to accept of His Majesty's Bounty, even tho' a Secret: Upon which I made a new Application to General Conway, that he would prevail on his Majesty to depart from this Condition. The General only requires, as so reasonable, that Mr Rousseau should promise to accept, in case the King be pleas'd to bestow on him a Pension publickly. I have wrote him the enclos'd for that Purpose, in case he be with you at Davenport. I have also wrote to Wooton under Direction to your Steward, in case he be at that Place. [redacted] If he be at Wooton, you may open & read & burn the enclos'd

I am Dear Sir
Your most obedient & most humble Servant
David Hume

Lisle Street
Leicester Fields
19 June 1766

Letter from Hume in Reference to his Quarrel with Rousseau

Hume's Character of Himself.

To conclude historically with my own character, I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open,

social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men any wise eminent have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched or even attacked by her baleful tooth; and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct; not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability.

I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

William Robertson.

Ten years younger than Hume, there can be no question that WILLIAM ROBERTSON owed his initiation as a writer to the more famous philosopher. When still a minister in a parish in Edinburgh, he produced his *History of Scotland*, in which he dealt with the half-century preceding the point where Hume began. This was the first, and remained the most famous, of a series of historical works which achieved a success the incidents of which read to us now as almost fabulous. If the record can be believed, Robertson was the British author who, of all in the eighteenth century, was continuously the best paid for what he wrote. In Robertson the faults as well as the merits of Hume were exaggerated. His style, with a certain Gallic artificiality, was nevertheless extremely brilliant and graceful, and in the finish of its general summaries surpassed that of the elder historian. But Robertson was still more unwilling than Hume to turn to the original sources of knowledge, still more content to take his facts second-hand, and not less superficial in his estimate of the forces underlying the movements of political and social history. It may be doubted whether the exercise of such research as we think inevitable for such a task, and as both Hume and Robertson disdained, might not have spoiled that brilliant, if always inadequate, evolution which so deeply fascinated their contemporaries, and may still, for a while, dazzle ourselves. What they wrote was not so much history in the exact sense, as a philosophical survey of events, in which they thought it not admissible only, but proper, to tincture the whole with the colour of their own convictions or political views. They were, in fact, empirics, who prepared the world of readers for genuine scientific history, and the founder of the latter was Gibbon.

William Robertson (1721–1793) was the son of the minister of Borthwick in Mid-Lothian, where he was born on the 19th of September 1721. He was trained at Dalkeith School and Edinburgh University, presenting at both a model of industry and accomplishment. His father was promoted to the Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh, and the son was appointed, at the age of twenty-two, minister of Gladsmuir in East Lothian. He was hardly settled in the manse before the death of his father and his mother, within a few hours of one another, threw the entire burden of a brother

and six sisters on his hands. Robertson possessed signal energy and elevation of character; he did not shrink from his responsibilities, and by sheer ability he soon rose to a position of high influence in the Church of Scotland. Meanwhile, as early as 1753, he had begun to collect materials for a great literary enterprise, and in 1759 he issued in two volumes his celebrated *History of Scotland*. This brought him in much honour, money, and prestige, but although tempted to come up to London, he did not allow the flattery of his new admirers to interfere with the noiseless conduct of his life. He remained at his ecclesiastical post in Edinburgh, and he leisurely set about his *History of Charles V.*, which appeared in 1769 in three volumes. Subsequently he gave his attention, with less brilliant success, to the histories of America and of India. In his own age Robertson was held the equal of Hume and of Gibbon, each of whom, indeed, he excelled in the purely material parts of success. Industrious, serviceable, and wholly unpretentious, Robertson made no enemies even as historiographer for Scotland. His famous phrase about the duty of not going to see stage plays—"it is sacred on me, but not obligatory on others"—exemplifies the prudence and candour of his mind. After a life of extreme contentment, Robertson died, where he had lived so long, in Edinburgh, on the 11th of June 1793.

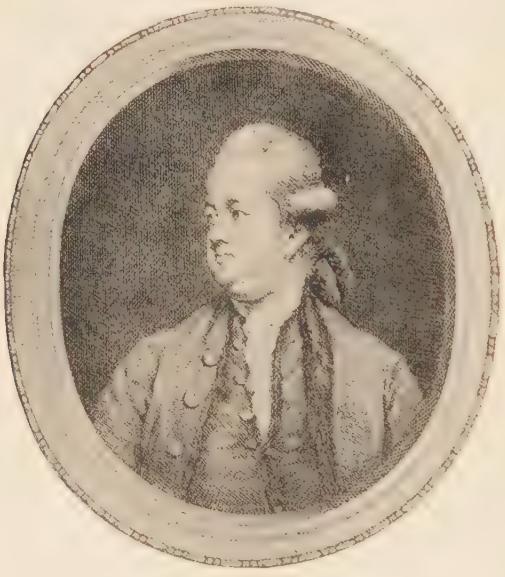
William Robertson

After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Edward Gibbon (1737–1794)

To EDWARD GIBBON, who timidly deprecated comparison with Robertson and Hume, criticism is steadily awarding a place higher and higher above them. He is, indeed, one of the great writers of the century, one of those who exemplify in the finest way the signal merits of the age in which he flourished. The book by which he mainly survives, the vast *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, began to appear in 1776, and was not completed until 1788. It was at once discovered by all who were competent to judge, that here was a new thing introduced into the literature of the world. Mézeray and Voltaire had written in French, Hume and Robertson in English,

historical works which had charming qualities of the rhetorical order, but which did not pass beyond the rudimentary stage of history, in which the hasty compilation of documents, without close investigation of their value, took the place of genuine and independent research. At length in Gibbon, after a life of forty years mostly spent in study and reflection, a writer was found who united "all the broad spirit of comprehensive survey with the thorough and minute patience of a Benedictine." After long debate, Gibbon fixed upon the greatest historical subject which the chronicle of the world supplied; undaunted by its extreme obscurity and remoteness, he determined to persevere in investigating it, and to sacrifice all other interests and ambitions to its complete elucidation. The mysterious and elaborate story of the transition from the Pagan to the Christian world might well have daunted any mind, but Gibbon kept his thoughts detached from all other ideas, concentrating his splendid intellect on this vast and solitary theme, until his patience and his force moved the mountain, and "the encyclopædic history," as Freeman calls it, "the grandest of all historical designs," took form and shape in six magnificent volumes.



Edward Gibbon

After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Some modern critics have found the attitude of Gibbon unsympathetic, his manner cold and superficial, his scepticism impervious to the passion of religious conviction. We may admit that these charges are well founded, and set them down to the credit of the age in which he lived, so averse to enthusiasm and ebullition. But to dwell too long on these defects is to miss a recognition of Gibbon's unique importance. His style possesses an extraordinary pomp and richness; ill adapted, perhaps, for the lighter parts of speech, it is unrivalled in the exercise of lofty and sustained heroic narrative. The language of Gibbon never flags; he walks for ever as to the clash of arms, under an imperial banner; a military music animates his magnificent descriptions of battles, of sieges, of panoramic scenes of antique civilisation. He understood, as few historical writers have done, how much the reader's enjoyment of a sustained narrative depends on the appeal to his visual sense. Perhaps he leaned on this strength of his style too much, and sacrificed the abstract to the concrete. But the book is so deeply grounded on personal accurate research, is the result of reflection at once so bold and so broad, with so extraordinary an intuition selects the correct aspect where several points of view were possible, that less than any

other history of the eighteenth century does the *Decline and Fall* tend to become obsolete, and of it is still said, what the most scientific of historians said only a generation ago, "Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too."

Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) was the eldest son of a country gentleman of good family. He was born at Putney on the 27th of April 1737; of the seven children of his parents he was the only one who survived infancy, and his own health was so miserable that it was impossible to subject him to any regular course of education. He suffered greatly, and he afterwards attributed the preservation of his life to the devoted care of his aunt, Catherine Porten. Shut out from the ordinary channels of learning, Gibbon read with an "indiscriminate appetite which subsided by degrees into the historic line." At the age of fifteen a great and unexpected improvement took place in his health, and his nervous disorders vanished. He was immediately sent to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he passed fourteen months, "the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life. To the University of Oxford," he says, "I acknowledge no obligation." He became greatly attracted to theological disquisition, and in 1753, in the beginning of his seventeenth year, he "fell by the noble hand" of Bossuet, and was privately admitted into the Church of Rome. He could not return to Oxford, and his father instantly hurried him over to Switzerland, where he was placed in the charge of a Protestant pastor at Lausanne. It took a whole year and a half to convert him back to Calvinism, but at the close of 1754 "the articles of the Romish creed disappeared like a dream," and he received the sacrament in the Protestant church. His intellectual progress at Lausanne was steady and brilliant; Gibbon soon advanced beyond the speed and measure of his tutor, who wisely, he says, "left me to my genius." Before he left Lausanne, in April 1758, he had made a survey of the Latin classics, which was neither hasty nor superficial, and had laid the foundation of a study of Greek literature. In 1757 he met Susanne Curchod, the beauty of Lausanne, and spoke to her in "the voice of truth and passion"; but his father "would not hear of this strange alliance," and Gibbon himself was destitute and therefore helpless. "After a painful struggle, I yielded to my fate; I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son." The lady became famous as Madame Necker, and Gibbon never indulged again in any dream of matrimonial felicity. After five years of retired and happy mental training in Lausanne, during which time Gibbon lost for life all the insular prejudices of the race, his father abruptly summoned him to England. His father welcomed him "on terms of easy and equal politeness," but he had married a second time; his step-mother, however, proved a cultivated woman and a delightful friend. In 1761 Gibbon published in French an *Essay on the Study of Literature*, which he had composed in Switzerland. He now appears to us in the incongruous capacity of the acting colonel of a militia regiment of grenadiers; at first the exercises of the

Edward Gibbon

From the 1796 Edition of his "Works"

field were interesting to one who already intended to be a military historian, but he was soon wearied and disgusted with the toil and the company. When the militia were disbanded in the last days of 1762, Gibbon did not conceal his satisfaction. He lost no time in leaving England, and spent four months in Paris, before settling again in Lausanne, where he spent the remainder of 1763 in preparing for a study of the antiquities of Italy. He then went south, and in his memorable words, "It was at Rome, on the 15th of October 1764, as I sat musing amid the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the Decline and Fall of the city first started to my mind." In the summer of 1765 he

The Villa Diodati, near Lausanne

returned to England, eager to begin his colossal task, but the time and his own genius were not ripe for it. He occupied himself on various schemes, which came to nothing, until 1770, when his father died at Buriton, leaving an encumbered estate. Gibbon moved into London, where he lived very quietly, and now with astonishing concentration of purpose set himself to the construction of his great history; the first volume was finished in 1773 and published three years later. The author was unknown to the world, and even his acquaintances, like Horace Walpole, had "never suspected the extent of his talents." Three large editions were sold off in a few weeks, and Gibbon's position was assured. He went over to Paris, and there was so much fêted that it was "quite a struggle to get him." During these years (1774–80) Gibbon was in Parliament as M.P. for Liskeard, and from 1779 to 1783 he held the lucrative appointment of a Lord of Trade. When Lord North went out of office Gibbon found his income very sensibly reduced, and he determined to leave England. In September 1783 he joined his friend Deyverdun at Lausanne, in a house

Dear Madam.

I was truly disappointed that you could not admit my visit this spring and still more concerned at the motive of your refusal. Yet I was glad to hear of your indisposition from your own pen; and the firmness of the hand and style gave me the most pleasing assurances of your strength: and I most sincerely hope that your recovery will be completed and established by the return of summer. I am now preparing, by a last visit to Lord and Lady Sheffield, for my departure to the Continent, and I propose being at Lausanne before the end of next month. I feel as I ought your kind anxiety at my leaving England, but I you will not disapprove my chusing the place most agreable to my circumstances and temper, and I need not remind you that all countries are under the care of the same providence.

Letter from Gibbon

Your good wishes and advice will not, I trust, be thrown away on a barren soil; and whatever you may have been told of my opinions, I can assure you with truth, that I consider Religion as the best guide of youth and the best support of old age: that I firmly believe there is less real happiness in the business and pleasures of the World, than in the life, which you have chosen, of devotion and retirement.

Lord and Lady Eliot have passed the winter in Cornwall, but I have seen their sons in town. Poor Sir Stanier Porten is still alive, that is all I can say, but his strength decays and his understanding is quite gone. Lord Sheffield proposes to enclose his letter in the same frank with mine, I shall say nothing of him or his family, and only hope you may be satisfied with the state of your affairs in Sussex.

I am Dear Madam most affectionately Yours

Gibbon

Sheffield place
June 30th 1788.

overlooking the Lake of Geneva. Here, for four years, immersed in work, "one day glided by another in tranquil uniformity." On the night of the 27th of June 1787 the colossal task was finished, and the last page written of the last volume of the *Decline and Fall*. He took the MS. to England, and the three concluding volumes of the book were published in May 1788. Gibbon rapidly returned to Lausanne, where in a little more than a year he was called upon to part from his companion and lifelong friend, the excellent Deyverdun. Gibbon began to lose pleasure in his beautiful house at Lausanne, and he determined "to fly from poor Deyverdun's shade, which meets me at every turn." He delayed, however, reluctant to move, until the Revolution frightened him away in 1793, after an exile of ten years. He was now much a sufferer from the gout, and grown very inactive in body; this perhaps predisposed him to a variety of disorders, of which dropsy was the most prominent. Yet his final illness was a surprise to those about him, and it is said that but for his own singular neglect of his symptoms it needed by no means to have been fatal. He died in his lodgings in St. James's Street on the 16th of January 1794. His most intimate friend, Lord Sheffield, who had not been able to reach him in time to bid him farewell, undertook the arrangement and publication of Gibbon's papers, and continued during the remainder of his life, with equal judgment and piety, to protect the fame of the historian. Above all, he edited in 1796 the invaluable fragments of an autobiography which Gibbon had left. In middle life the historian became extremely corpulent, and "his mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage." He was the type of the elegant and philosophical hedonist of the eighteenth century, and "sometimes gave the prettiest little dinners in the world." But we think of him mainly in his salon on the terrace at Lausanne, buried for hour after hour in his herculean labour of reconstructing the ancient world from the ruins of its decay.

From "The Decline and Fall."

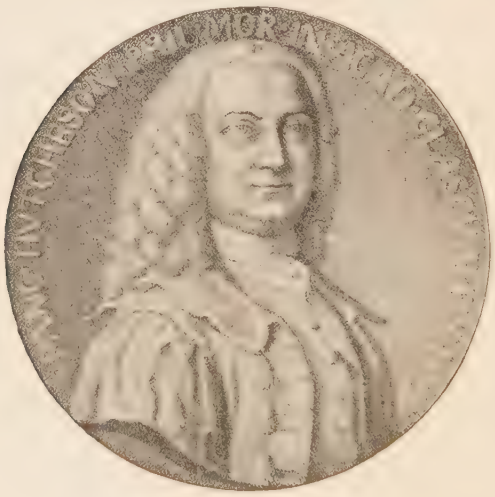
The eloquence of Claudian has celebrated, with lavish applause, the victory of Pollentia, one of the most glorious days in the life of his patron; but his reluctant and partial muse bestows more genuine praise on the character of the Gothic king. His name is indeed branded with the reproachful epithets of pirate and robber, to which the conquerors of every age are so justly entitled; but the poet of Stilicho is compelled to acknowledge that Alaric possessed the invincible temper of mind, which rises superior to every misfortune, and derives new resources from adversity. After the total defeat of his infantry, he escaped, or rather withdrew, from the field of battle, with the greatest part of his cavalry entire and unbroken. Without wasting a moment to lament the irreparable loss of so many brave companions, he left his victorious enemy to bind in chains the captive images of a Gothic king; and boldly resolved to break through the unguarded passes of the Apennine, to spread desolation over the fruitful face of Tuscany, and to conquer and die before the gates of Rome. The capital was saved by the active and incessant diligence of Stilicho: but he respected the despair of his enemy; and, instead of committing the fate of the republic to the chance of another battle, he proposed to purchase the absence of the Barbarians. The spirit of Alaric would have rejected such terms, the permission of a retreat, and the offer of a pension, with contempt and indignation; but he exercised a limited and precarious authority over the independent chieftains, who had raised him, for *their* service, above the rank of his equals; they were still less disposed to follow an unsuccessful general, and many of them were tempted to consult their interest by a private negotiation with the minister of Honorius.

From Gibbon's "Letters."

On the day, or rather the night, of the 27th of June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, I wrote the last lines of the last page [of *The Decline and Fall*] in a summer-house in my garden [at Lausanne]. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy at the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken an everlasting farewell of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.

Philosophy

History, fiction, poetry—these were the three departments in which the literature of the centre of the eighteenth century in England mainly excelled, so far as form was concerned, and of these we have now given a rapid survey. If we consider philosophy, we must revert again to Hume, the leading utilitarian of the age, and as a critic of thought without a rival. It is difficult, however, to give to the philosophical writings of Hume more prominence in such an outline as this than we give to those of Locke, although his merit as a writer on speculative subjects is never quite so negative as Locke's. The limpid grace of his style is apparent even in a production so technical as the *Treatise of Human Nature*. Still less must Hutcheson, Hartley, or Reid detain us, prominent as was the position taken by each of these in the development of philosophical speculation. Philosophy by this time had become detached from *belles lettres;* it was now quite indifferent to those who practised it whether their sentences were harmonious or no. Their sole anxiety was to express what they had to say with the maximum of distinctness. Philosophy, in fact, quitted literature and became a part of science.



Francis Hutcheson

From an Engraving by F. Bartolozzi

It is not often that the lives of the philosophers offer many incidents of a picturesque value to the biographer. Nothing disturbed the quietude of Hutcheson, Hartley, and Reid. **Francis Hutcheson** (1694–1746) was an Irish clergyman and schoolmaster, who was born at Drumalig, County Down, on the 8th of August 1694, and kept school in Ireland until 1724, when he came to reside permanently in Glasgow as Professor of Moral Philosophy in that University. His *Inquiry into the Originals of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* appeared anonymously in 1725; his great *System of*

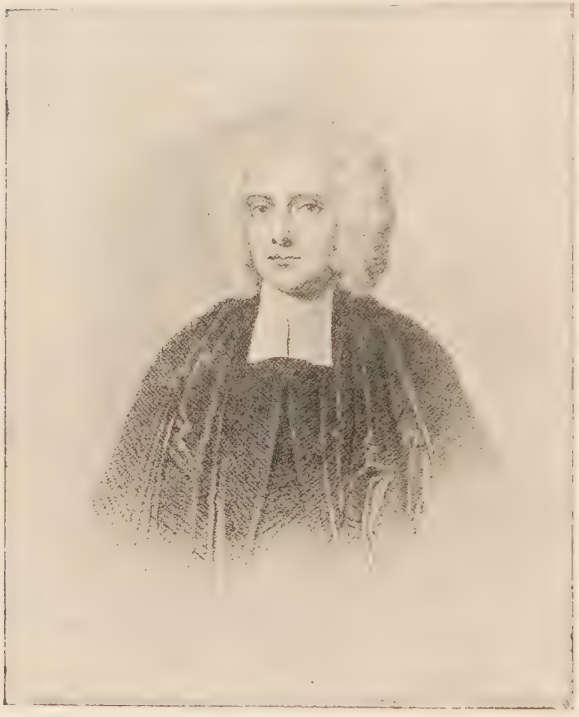
Moral Philosophy was posthumous (1755). **David Hartley** (1705-1757) was a Yorkshire physician, educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, whose ingenious treatise on vibrations in the brain was published in 1749 as *Observations on Man*. **Thomas Reid** (1710–1796) lived a life no less uneventful; he was a minister of the Scotch Church, who held successive livings in Aberdeenshire, and from 1751 to his death was Professor of Philosophy at the Universities of first Aberdeen and then Glasgow. Reid's most famous book, the *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, was published in 1764. In this he attacked Hume, but with so little venom that he submitted the proof-sheets to that philosopher in order to be assured that he was not misrepresenting him.

David Hartley
From an Engraving by William Blake

Nor was theology more amenable than philosophy to the charms of style. The one great man of religious intellect, JOSEPH BUTLER, was wholly devoid of literary curiosity, and austerely disdainful of the manner in which his thoughts were expressed. When his thought is direct, Butler's style is lucid and simple; but when, as is often the case, especially in the *Analogy*, he packs his sentences with labouring complexities of argument, he becomes exceedingly clumsy and hard. Butler stood in complete isolation, as utterly distinct from his contemporaries as Milton had been from his. But if we descend to the commoner ground of theology, we scarcely meet with features more appropriate to our present inquiry. The controversy of Lowth with Warburton was lively, but it was not literature; the sceptics and the Unitarians did not conduct their disquisitions with more elegance than the orthodox clergy; while Paley, whose *Horæ Paulinæ* comes a little later than the close of our present period, seems to mark in its worst form the complete and fatal divorce of eighteenth-century theology from anything like passion or beauty of form. A complete aridity, or else a bombastic sentimentality, is the mark of the prose religious literature of the time. In the hands of Hurd or Hugh Blair we have come far, not merely from the gorgeous style of Fuller and Taylor, but from the academic grace of Tillotson and the noble fulness of Barrow. This decay of theological literature was even more strongly marked in France, where, after the death of Massillon, we meet with no other noticeable name until the nineteenth century opens. It was due, without doubt, to the suspicion of enthusiasm and highly strung religious feeling which was felt throughout Europe in the generations preceding the Revolution.

Theology

Joseph Butler (1692–1752), who was the youngest of the eight children of a substantial woollen-draper of Wantage, was born in a house called the Priory, to which his father had retired from business, on the 18th of May 1692. The family being Presbyterians, Butler was sent to a dissenting school at Gloucester, where he formed a lifelong friendship with Secker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. He was trained at this school, which was presently moved to Tewkesbury, with a view to his becoming a Nonconformist minister. At the age of nineteen he entered, incognito, into a theologico-metaphysical correspondence with the eminent Dr. Samuel Clarke. That divine perceived the greatness of mind of his young and unknown correspondent, and later on, in 1716, published the letters of the latter anonymously. Butler became convinced about 1712 that it was his duty to conform to the Established Church, and after some opposition his father gave way, permitting him in 1715 to be entered as a commoner of Oriel College, Oxford. It is not certain when he received ordination, but in December 1718 he was a priest, and, through the recommendation of Clarke, was appointed preacher at the Rolls Court. He had formed friendships in the Talbot family, and in 1722 the bishop of that name presented him with the living of Houghton-le-Skerne in his diocese of Durham, and Butler's friend, Secker, who had also joined the Church of England, presently followed him to Houghton-le-Spring. It was Secker (who had greater aplomb than Butler), who persuaded Bishop Talbot in 1725 to remove their friend to the far more amenable rectory of Stanhope; this enabled Butler to resign the preachership of the Rolls in 1726, on which occasion he published his *Fifteen Sermons*. These gave him at once a leading position among philosophic theologians. For seven years he now lived buried at Stanhope, gradually shaping his great work, *The Analogy of Religion*. It appeared to Secker that his friend was contented with too extreme an obscurity, and when he himself was appointed chaplain to the king, his first thought was for the advancement of Butler; but on speaking to Queen Caroline, her discouraging reply was, "I thought Mr. Butler had been dead." When one of the Talbots was made Lord Chancellor, however, he appointed Butler his chaplain in 1733, and this brought the recluse back to London and to Oxford. The queen now discovered that he was alive, and in 1736 made him her clerk of the closet; but the following year she died. In 1738 Butler was made Vice-Dean of Rochester and Bishop of Bristol. By



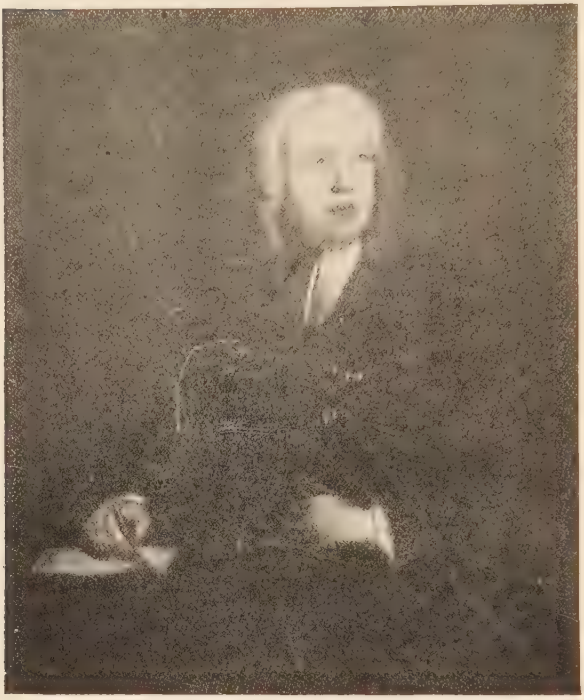
Joseph Butler
From an Engraving by Cooper

this time, namely in 1736, the *Analogy* had been published, and had gradually enforced the attention of all thinking persons. The solidity and gravity of the argument, however, failed to provoke much of that controversy in which the eighteenth century was apt to delight; the deists, in particular, were careful to leave Butler alone. In 1740 he was made Dean of St. Paul's, which office he held with Bristol, but resigned his connection with Stanhope and Rochester. His repairs at Bristol were so extensive, that they cost him annually a larger sum than the income of the See, but Butler used to say that "the deanery of St. Paul's paid for them." In 1747 he was offered the Primacy, but refused it, saying, probably in a fit of low spirits, that "it was too late for him to try to support a falling Church." Nor was it without great difficulty that he was persuaded, in July 1750, to allow himself to be translated to Durham, where he did not indeed take full possession till a year later. He bought a mansion at Hampstead, which he made his residence whenever he had to visit London, in which "most enchanting, gay, pretty, elegant house," he dined with Secker, now also a bishop, whenever it was possible to do so. Butler, however, had scarcely settled into his duties at Durham when his health gave way. Early in June 1752 he was carried to Bath, already in a very alarming condition; he was very much troubled by the heat, and the physicians immediately despaired of him. On the 16th of the month he died, and was buried, not at Durham, but in his old cathedral of Bristol. Although he was only sixty when he died, Butler had long borne the appearance of a very aged man. He was divinely placid and venerable; "his white hair hung gracefully on his shoulders, and his whole figure was patriarchal." He had an extraordinary gift for awakening and retaining affection, and Secker was but the oldest and the most eminent of a chain of devoted friends. In his younger days he used to gallop around his parish on a black pony, "always riding very fast." He was helpless in the hands of beggars, who would sometimes so cluster about him, as to force him to take shelter in his own rectory. Little else is recorded of the habits of this contemplative, innocent, and saintly man.

From "The Analogy of Religion."

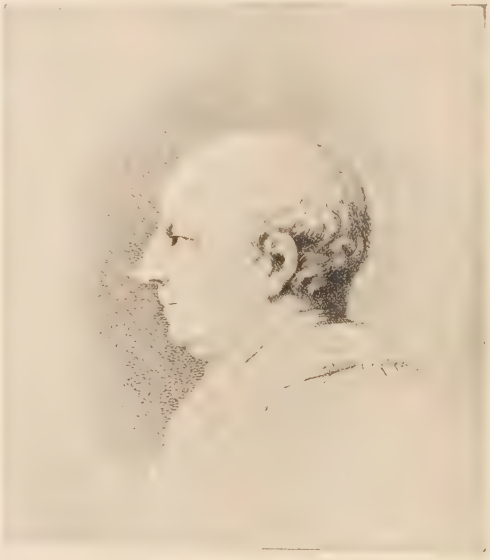
If there are any persons who never set themselves heartily and in earnest to be informed in religion; if there are any who secretly wish it may not prove true, and are less attentive to evidence than to difficulties, and more to objections than to what is said in answer to them; these persons will scarce be thought in a likely way of seeing the evidence of religion, though it were most certainly true and capable of being ever so fully proved. If any accustom themselves to consider this subject usually in the way of mirth and sport; if they attend to forms and representations and inadequate manners of expression, instead of the real things intended by them (for signs often can be no more than inadequately expressive of the things signified), or if they substitute human errors in the room of divine truth; why may not all or any of these things hinder some men from seeing that evidence which really is seen by others; as a like turn of mind with respect to matters of common speculation and practice does, we find by experience, hinder them from attaining that knowledge and right understanding in matters of common speculation and practice, which more fair and attentive minds attain to? And the effect will be the same, whether their neglect of seriously considering the evidence of religion, and their indirect behaviour with regard to it, proceed from mere carelessness or from the grosser vices, or whether it be owing to this, that forms and figurative manners of expression as well as errors administer occasions of ridicule, when the things intended and the truth itself would not. Men may indulge a ludicrous turn so far as to lose all sense of conduct and prudence in world y affairs, and even, as it seems, to impair their faculty of reason. And in general, levity, carelessness, passion, and prejudice, do hinder us from being rightly informed with respect to common things; and they may, in like manner, and perhaps in some further providential manner, with respect to moral and religious subjects, hinder evidence from being laid before us, and from being seen when it is.

William Warburton (1698–1779) was born at Newark on the 24th of December 1698. He was intended to follow his father's profession and be clerk of his native town, but at the age of twenty-five he received holy orders from the Archbishop of York without having enjoyed any college training. He was conscious of his educational deficiencies, and for eighteen years he did hardly anything else but study. In 1741 he became acquainted with Pope, over whose mind Warburton contrived to exercise a curious ascendency. Pope introduced him to the wealthy Ralph Allen, of Prior Park, whose niece Warburton married in 1745. He was now rapidly promoted; in 1757 he was made Dean of Bristol, and in 1759 Bishop of Gloucester.



William Warburton
After the Portrait by Charles Phillips

Warburton, a man of very high ability, was all his life a fighter; controversy was the breath of his nostrils, and he conducted it with unscrupulous vehemence and rancour, but he was a warm and loyal friend. The death of his only son in 1776 paralysed the faculties of Warburton, who lingered in a melancholy condition until June 7, 1779. **Richard Hurd** (1720–1808), the disciple and ally of Warburton, was a man of similar character, no less arrogant, but with less capacity of kindly feeling. He was long Bishop of Worcester, and refused the Primacy. **Dr. Hugh Blair** (1718–1800), once among the most prominent, is now perhaps the most obsolete of English writers. He was the most celebrated pulpit orator of his time, and his lectures and sermons found tens of thousands of admirers. Burns came into amusing collision with the redoubtable vanity



Richard Hurd

of Blair when he was in Edinburgh in 1787. **William Paley** (1743–1805) possessed greater penetration of intellect than any of these; his extremely quiet life was spent in passing from one incumbency to another, closing with the valuable rectory of Bishop-Wearmouth. His famous *Horæ Paulinæ* appeared in 1790. A graphic illustration in his best-known book, the *Evidences of Christianity*, 1792, caused him to be called "Pigeon Paley," an elegant sobriquet which he owed to the wit of King George III. His *Natural Theology* was published in 1802, and set the keystone on the structure of his fame. Paley died at Lincoln on the 25th of May 1805, and was buried in Carlisle Cathedral. The "specious sophist," **Soame Jenyns** (1705–1787), unpleasantly remembered by his clash of arms with Dr. Johnson, had been an earlier author of *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, 1774. In his popular *Inquiry into the Origin of Evil*, 1759, he "ventured far beyond his depth," and Johnson's treatment of it let loose the impertinence of the wits on poor Jenyns, who was a gracious, miscellaneous writer, not without intelligence, and on the whole very harshly dealt with.

William Paley
After the Portrait by George Romney

In one department of letters this period was very rich. Whether they owed it or no to their familiarity with Parisian society and social modes, those strangely assorted friends, Gray and HORACE WALPOLE, exceeded all their English contemporaries in the composition of charmingly picturesque familiar letters. Less spontaneous, but of an extreme elegance and distinction, were the letters addressed by the fourth Earl of CHESTERFIELD to

Soame Jenyns
After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

The Letter Writers

his natural son, a correspondence long considered to be the final "protocol" of good breeding in deportment. Of a totally different character were the caustic political invectives issued in the form of correspondence, and under the pseudonym of JUNIUS, between 1769 and 1772; but these were letters which gave no pleasure to the recipients, and the form of which precluded all reply. It is, perhaps, not fair to include Junius among the letter-writers, but the correspondence of Chesterfield, Walpole, and Gray will certainly bear comparison with the best in the same class which was produced in France

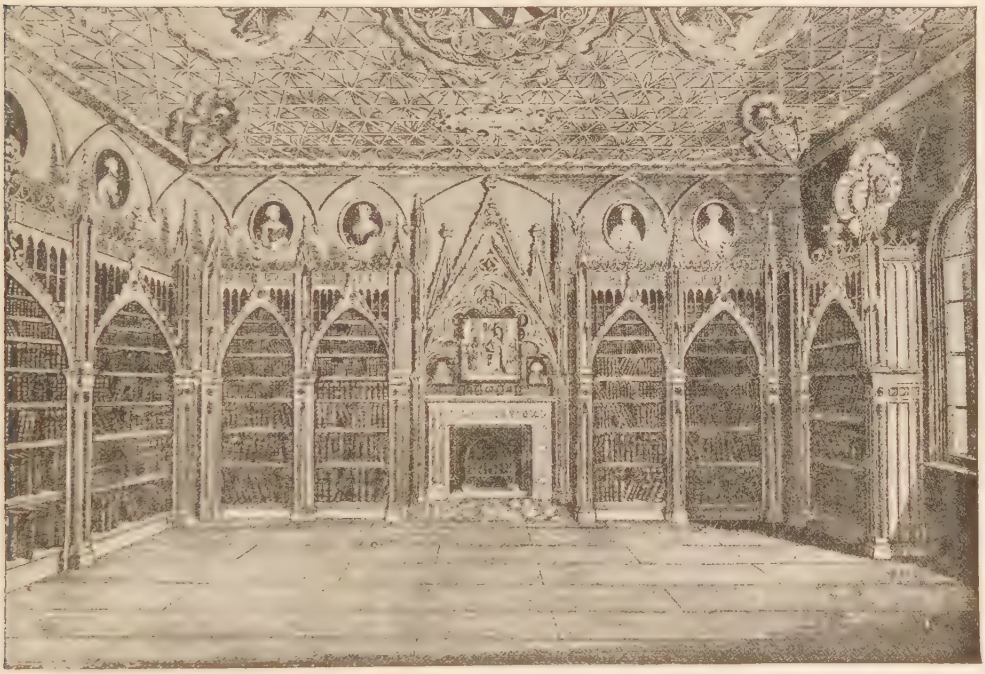
View of Strawberry Hill

From "A Description of the Villa of Mr. H. W.," 1784

during the eighteenth century. Walpole, in particular, excels all the French in the peculiarly Gallic combination of wit, mundane observation, and picturesque, easy detail.

Horace Walpole (1717–1797), who died fourth Earl of Orford, was the third son of Sir Robert Walpole of Houghton, the famous Prime Minister. He was born in Arlington Street on the 24th of September 1717. He went to Eton in April 1727, and was a refined and fastidious schoolboy of a type not at that time familiar. Among his earliest friends were the Montagus, Gray, and Richard West. In March 1735 Walpole passed to King's College, Cambridge. In 1737 his mother, Lady Walpole, died, and he was appointed by his father to a post in the Custom House. He exchanged for or added to this other appointments, and, in short, after this time was never again a charge to his family. He did not quit Cambridge, however, until 1739, when he started with Gray on the foreign tour which has already been described in our account of that poet. After Gray left him in May 1741 Horace Walpole fell ill of a quinsy at Reggio, and would have died but for the devotion of Joseph Spence, the antiquary

(1698–1768). When he had recovered he went on to Venice, and then by sea, and through France, to England. During his absence he had been elected M.P. for Callington; a few months later his father was defeated, and resigned, being created Earl of Orford. The whole family retired to Houghton, but the great fallen statesman only survived until 1745; he left his son Horace a decent fortune and his famous house in Arlington Street. In August 1746 Horace Walpole took an apartment within the precincts of Windsor Castle, and began to entertain there; but it did not quite suit him, and, a year later, he bought "a little new farm, just out of Twickenham," from Mrs. Chenevix, the toy-woman. It was itself a toy, "set in enamelled meadows, with



Walpole's Library at Strawberry Hill

From "A Description of the Villa of Mr. H. W.," 1784

filigree hedges," and its name was Strawberry Hill. He called it "new," but it was about fifty years old, and it simply served as the nucleus for a little Gothic castle. Walpole amused himself by wholly rebuilding it, and the last addition, "the great north bedchamber," was not finished until 1770. This fantastic mansion was the joy and occupation of Walpole's whole life. In 1754 he was elected M.P. for Castle Rising, and in 1757 for King's Lynn, both Norfolk boroughs in the family interest, but he took little or no continuous part in politics. He had always dabbled in letters, and his correspondence remains to prove to us how admirably he had written in easy prose since childhood; but Horace Walpole's authorship began with the trifling satire, *A Letter from Xo Ho*, 1757. In this same year he set up at Strawberry Hill his celebrated printing press, his *officina arbuteana;* the first offspring of which was Gray's *Odes*. In 1758 Walpole printed his *Royal and Noble Authors of England*, which was "marvellously in fashion," to his great astonishment; and he collected his *Fugitive*

Tuesday aug. 18th
1796.

Tho I this morning received yr Sunday's full Letter, it is three o'clock before I have a moment to begin answering it, & must do it myself, for Kirgate is not at home. First came in Mr Barrett, & then Losway, who has been for some days at Mr Audrey's with his Wife; She, so afflicted for her only little Girl, that she shut herself up in her chamber, & would not be seen — the man Losway does not seem to think that much of the Loss belonged to him: he pronounced with his usual vivacity. Next arrived Dr Burney, on his way to Mrs Boscawen. He asked me about deplorable Camilla — alas! I had not recovered of it enough to be loud in its praise. I am glad however to hear that She has realized about 2000£ — and the worth (no doubt) of as much in honour, at Windsor, where She was detained three days, & where even Mons Barbelay was allowed to dine.

I rejoice at your bathing promising so well. If the beautiful Fugitive (from Brighthelmston) dips too, the Waves will be still more salutary —

(1) Venus orta mari, mare prositat cunti.

I like your going to survey Castles & Houses; it is who comes nearer than Boswell & scribbling tomes of Letters — which you see I cannot do —

Wednesday, after Breakfast. When I came home from Lady Mendip's last night, I attempted to finish This myself, but my poor Fingers were so tired by all the Work of the Day, that it will require Sir W. Jones's Gift of Tongues to interpret my Pothooks: one would think Arabic Characters were catching, for Agnes had shewn me a Volume of their Poems finely printed at Cambridge, with a Version, which Mr Douglas had lent to her, and said were very simple, and not in the inflated Stile of the East — You shall judge. In the first page I opened, I found a storm of Lightning that had burst into a horse-laugh — I resume the Thread of my Letter. You had not examined Arundel Castle enough, for You do not mention the noble —

Extract from a Letter of Walpole's

Pieces in Verse and Prose. His more important work, *Anecdotes of Painting in England,* came from the Strawberry Press in 1762–63; his romance, *The Castle of Otranto,* was published in 1764. He now gave his pen and his press a rest, and went in 1765 to Paris and Versailles, where he was presented to the French royal family, of whom he has preserved a most entertaining account. Paris he thought "the ugliest, beastliest town in the universe," although its society welcomed and caressed him. He met Madame du Deffand, whom he called at first "an old blind debauchee of wit," but with whom he presently struck up what became a lifelong and devoted friendship. After his return from this somewhat momentous visit to France, Walpole continued to produce publications, the most ambitious of which belong to the same weeks of the early spring of 1768, the paradoxical white-washing of Richard III., called *The Historic Doubts,* and the grim tragedy of *The Mysterious Mother.* He was henceforth more and more occupied with the mundane duties of entertaining at Strawberry Hill, and of holding elaborate and witty correspondence with his friends. In 1779 he left the historic house where he was born in Arlington Street, and took one, after a tedious suit in Chancery, in Berkeley Square; in 1780 he lost, at the age of eighty-four, his lively old friend, Madame du Deffand. Her place was in a measure taken by two delightful young women, Mary and Agnes Berry—"my two Straw Berries"—whom he prevailed upon, some years later, to come and live at Cliveden. In 1792 Horace Walpole underwent what he called "the empty metamorphosis" of succeeding his nephew as Earl of Orford. He still continued to entertain the world; when he was seventy-eight Queen Charlotte was his guest. He died in Berkeley Square on the 2nd of March 1797, and was buried at Houghton. Horace Walpole was the ideal of a *petit maître* in manner; "he always entered a room in a style of affected delicacy, *chapeau bras* between his hands, knees bent and feet on tiptoe." He usually dressed in lavender, with partridge silk stockings and gold buckles, and with lace ruffles and frill. He was more interesting to his own generation as a virtuoso than in any other capacity; to ours he is the type of the eighteenth-century exquisite person of quality, and the most animated letter-writer of an age which positively lives again in his admirably vivacious correspondence. Horace Walpole is far from being the most lovable, or the most thoughtful, or the most pathetic, but he is easily the wittiest and most graphic of English letter-writers, and the sixty-years' chronicle of his familiar epistles forms his main and immortal work.

Horace Walpole

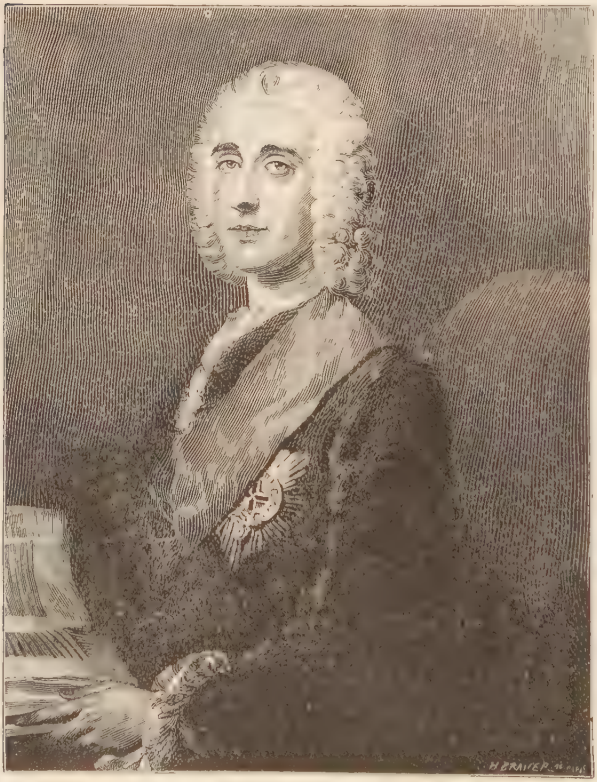
After the Portrait by Nathaniel Hone

WALPOLE'S ACCOUNT OF LORD BALMERINO'S EXECUTION.

The scaffold was immediately new-strewed with sawdust, the block new-covered, the executioner new-dressed, and a new axe brought. Then came old Balmerino, treading with the air of a general. As soon as he mounted the scaffold, he read the inscription on his coffin, as he did again afterwards: he then surveyed the spectators, who were in amazing numbers, even upon masts upon ships in the river; and pulling out his spectacles,

read a treasonable speech, which he delivered to the Sheriff, and said, the young Pretender was so sweet a Prince, that flesh and blood could not resist following him; and lying down to try the block, he said, "If I had a thousand lives, I would lay them all down here in the same cause!" He said if he had not taken the sacrament the day before, he would have knocked down Williamson, the Lieutenant of the Tower, for his ill-usage of him. He took the axe and felt it, and asked the headsman how many blows he had given Lord Kilmarnock; and gave him three guineas. Two clergymen, who attended him, coming up, he said, "No, gentlemen; I believe you have already done me all the service you can." Then he went to the corner of the scaffold, and called very loud for the warden to give him his periwig, which he took off, and put on a night-cap of Scotch plaid, and then pulled off his coat and waistcoat and lay down; but being told he was on the wrong side, vaulted round, and immediately gave the sign by tossing up his arm, as if he were giving the signal for battle. He received three blows, but the first certainly took away all sensation. He was not a quarter of an hour on the scaffold; Lord Kilmarnock above half a one. Balmerino certainly died with the intrepidity of a hero, but the insensibility of one too. As he walked from his prison to execution, seeing every window and top of house filled with spectators, he cried out, "Look, look, how they are all piled up like rotten oranges!"

Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of **Chesterfield** (1694–1773), was born in London on the 22nd of September 1694. He was the son of the third Earl, and his mother, Lady Elizabeth Savile, was the daughter of the Marquis of Halifax, who wrote the admirable essays. The main part of the career of Chesterfield belongs to politics. He entered the House of Commons in 1715, and spoke there six weeks before he was of age, thus rendering himself liable to a heavy fine. This was the beginning of a parliamentary career which lasted for forty years. In 1745–46 Chesterfield was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and greatly distinguished himself by the breadth of his policy. He had succeeded to the earldom in 1726, and was now offered a dukedom, which he refused. Chesterfield in his retirement cultivated the art of manners in its most exquisite degree, and his last words — "Give Dayrolles a chair"—show that he was polite to the final moment of his life. He died at Chesterfield House, South Audley Street, on the 24th of March 1773. During his lifetime,



Lord Chesterfield

After the Portrait by William Hoare

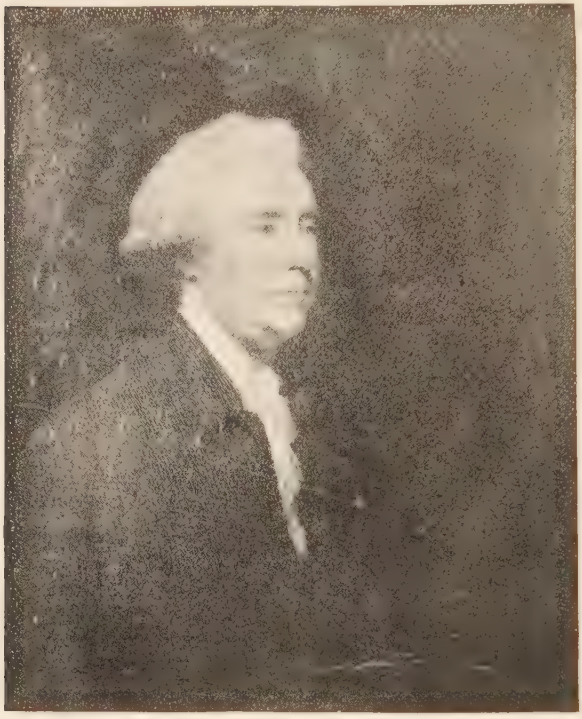
although a patron of letters, Chesterfield published nothing but two or three political tracts. But immediately after his death was issued by his widow Melusina von Scheulenburg, a collection of the Letters which he had written to his natural son, the child of a certain Madame du Bouchet; in this Philip Stanhope (1732–1768), whom he had made his heir, Chesterfield's hopes and ambitions were concentred. The Letters had been written as a guide to the lad in principles, in deportment, and in sentiment. Chesterfield knew that his son was weak and vague; he had a passionate desire to strengthen and direct him in what he intended should be the business of his life, "Negotiation abroad, and Oratory in the House of Commons at home." But the young Stanhope "was not calculated to shine"; his whole course, culminating in his early death, was a cruel disillusion for his father. The *Letters* of 1774 enjoyed a prodigious success, and are still a kind of classic. The politeness of Chesterfield was proverbial, but he contrived—probably through no fault of his own, but through the carelessness of a servant—to infuriate Johnson. Even by this witness, however, it is admitted that the manners of Chesterfield were exquisitely elegant.

FROM CHESTERFIELD'S "LETTERS."

Good manners are to particular societies what good morals are to society in general,—their cement and their security. And as laws are enacted to enforce good morals, or at least to prevent the ill effects of bad ones, so there are certain rules of civility, universally implied and received, to enforce good manners and punish bad ones. And indeed there seems to me to be less difference both between the crimes and punishments than at first one would imagine. The immoral man, who invades another's property, is justly hanged for it; and the ill-bred man, who by his ill-manners invades and disturbs the quiet and comforts of private life, is by common consent as justly banished society. Mutual complaisances, attentions, and sacrifices of little conveniences, are as natural an implied compact between civilised people as protection and obedience are between kings and subjects; whoever, in either case, violates that compact, justly forfeits all advantages arising from it. For my own part, I really think that, next to the consciousness of doing a good action, that of doing a civil one is the most pleasing; and the epithet which I should covet the most, next to that of Aristides, would be that of well-bred.

The series of polemical letters which appeared in *The Public Advertiser* under the pseudonym of JUNIUS produced a sensation which has never been paralleled in English political life and literature. The first of these epistles was printed on the 21st of January 1769, the last precisely three years later. Junius attacked the Government of the Duke of Grafton, which included Mansfield, North, and Granby, and his main point at first was their failure to support Wilkes, that champion of the democracy. The author of these letters remained throughout unknown, even to the publisher of the newspaper which printed them; although every effort was made to discover him, he was able to boast "I am the sole depositary of my secret, and it shall die with me." It was after these scandalous and brilliant diatribes had appeared at intervals for nearly a year, and when public curiosity was at its height, that Junius raised a perfect fury of sensation by attacking the King himself. Nobody now felt safe; as Burke said, "Kings, lords, and commons are but the sport of his fury." It is generally admitted that the style of Junius was superior to his principles; he posed as a sort of Radical, but was in favour of taxing the colonies; he did not disdain to retail private scandal, and his magnificent invection often betrays

a callous indifference to veracity. On the other hand, of the patriotism of Junius there can be as little question as of his courage. His letter to the King displays the former no less than his terrible philippics against the Dukes of Bedford and Grafton the latter. The correspondence of Junius ceased abruptly, but Woodfall, the editor of *The Public Advertiser*, reprinted the letters in two volumes in 1772. Extraordinary exertions have been made, but made in vain, to discover the name and rank of Junius. Nearly forty persons have been from time to time suggested, including Lord George Sackville (1716–1785), Horne Tooke (1736–1812), and the second Earl Temple (1711–1779). The greatest favourite of conjecture during the nineteenth century was Sir Philip Francis (1740–1818). But nothing is decided, nothing known; and, after a hundred and thirty years, we have advanced no further than Lord North had when he said, "The great boar of the wood, this mighty Junius, has broken through the toils and foiled the hunters."



Edmund Burke

After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

From the Letter of Junius to the King (December 19, 1769).

Sir,—It is the misfortune of your life, and originally the cause of every reproach and distress which has ever attended your government, that you should never have been acquainted with the language of truth till you heard it in the complaints of your people. It is not, however, too late to correct the error of your education. We are still inclined to make an indulgent allowance for the pernicious lessons you received in your youth, and to form the most sanguine hopes from the natural benevolence of your disposition. We are far from thinking you capable of a direct deliberate purpose to invade those original rights of your subjects on which all the civil and political liberties depend. Had it been possible for us to entertain a suspicion so dishonourable to your character, we should long since have adopted a style of remonstrance very distant from the humility of complaint. The doctrine inculcated by our laws, "that the king can do no wrong," is admitted without reluctance. We separate the amiable good-natured prince from the folly and treachery of his servants, and the private virtues of the man from the vices of his government. Were it not for this just distinction, I know not whether your majesty's condition, or that of the English nation, would deserve most to be lamented. I would prepare your mind for a favourable reception of truth, by removing every painful offensive

Sat. noon

Dr. Sir,

I am perfectly convinced how unpleasant it must be to you, to write me such a letter as I have just received containing so extraordinary & ridiculous a charge from the Barbour. I assure you that to the first communication of the kind I have had, you will undoubtedly be at a loss to give the security to the old Trustees & if he does not come one must be found that will. & to the exertions, they ought long since to have been withdrawn in good faith: The settling an intricate account with a Pistol at one's breast is not a pleasant way of doing business, nor I should think a satisfactory manner of having charges admitted. Everything else on our Post has been expressed in our Post & done. I never pay necessary attention to the Theatre and Wednesday's occasion have prevented this which I must naturally be led to do much oftener to-morrow I will do myself the pleasure of calling on you in the course of the Day.

Yours &c
R B Sheridan

Letter from Sheridan

idea of personal reproach. Your subjects, sir, wish for nothing but that, as *they* are reasonable and affectionate enough to separate your person from your government, so *you*, in your turn, would distinguish between the conduct which becomes the permanent dignity of a king, and that which serves only to promote the temporary interest and miserable ambition of a minister.

You ascended the throne with a declared—and, I doubt not, a sincere—resolution of giving universal satisfaction to your subjects. You found them pleased with the novelty of a young prince, whose countenance promised even more than his words, and loyal to you not only from principle but passion. It was not a cold profession of allegiance to the first magistrate, but a partial, animated attachment to a favourite prince, the native of their country. They did not wait to examine your conduct, nor to be determined by experience, but gave you a generous credit for the future blessings of your reign, and paid you in advance the dearest tribute of their affections. Such, sir, was once the disposition of a people who now surround your throne with reproaches and complaints. Do justice to yourself. Banish from your mind those unworthy opinions with which some interested persons have laboured to possess you. Distrust the men who tell you that the English are naturally light and inconstant; that they complain without a cause. Withdraw your confidence equally from all parties; from ministers, favourites, and relations; and let there be one moment in your life in which you have consulted your own understanding.

The drama enjoyed some revival in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when several practised writers for the boards went back to the tradition of Congreve and Farquhar, taking care to avoid the scandalous indecencies of the close of the Dryden period. Of the comedies of these writers, of whom Colman and Cumberland were the most abundant, those of Goldsmith and of SHERIDAN were the best and the most literary, and these have permanently held the stage.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan
After the Crayon Drawing by John Russell

Richard Brinsley Butler Sheridan (1751–1816) was the third of the children of Thomas Sheridan the actor (Johnson's "Sherry, naturally dull") and of his wife, Frances Chamberlaine (1724–1766), the novelist and playwright. He was born in Dublin on the 30th of October 1751; he attended a school in Dublin from the age of seven till eight and a half, and then rejoined his parents in London. His brilliant mother was his first real instructor, and pronounced him "an impenetrable dunce"; in 1762 he was sent with his elder brother to Harrow. Here their parents

left the boys when, becoming bankrupt, they had to retire to France; when they reached Blois Mrs. Sheridan died, too early to have divined her Richard's talent. At Harrow the latter failed to distinguish himself. Soon after leaving school Sheridan eloped to Dunkirk with a supposed heiress and very beautiful singer, Miss Elizabeth Linley, to whom he was clandestinely married at Calais. The couple returned to England, and poverty obliged them to separate; but a tremendous duel in which Sheridan was engaged made so great a stir that the secret was discovered. In April 1773 the couple were publicly married again; young Mrs. Sheridan is understood to have been the model for Lydia Languish. In the winter of 1774 they settled in a costly house in Orchard Street, and Sheridan began to be a successful dramatist. *The Rivals*, *St. Patrick's Day*, and *The Duenna* were all first performed in 1775, *The Trip to Scarborough* and *The School for Scandal* in 1777, and *The Critic* in 1779. With this admirable farce, and at the age of only twenty-eight, Sheridan practically closed his career as a man of letters. Next year he entered Parliament as member for Stafford, and threw himself warmly into the troubled political life of those days, when the American War was passing to its inevitable conclusion. Sheridan's public career, and even his experiences as manager of Drury Lane Theatre, which was rebuilt in 1792 and reopened in 1794 under his auspices, scarcely belong to the history of literature, nor does the celebrated part he took in the impeachment of Warren Hastings in 1787–88. Mrs. Sheridan having died in 1792, Sheridan married a foolish girl in her teens, Miss Esther Ogle, daughter of the Dean of Winchester, with a small fortune. Sheridan's prospects darkened as he advanced in years, although he enjoyed bursts of brilliant prosperity. In 1809 the destruction of Drury Lane by fire was a terrible blow to him. The close of his life was made wretched by desperate financial subterfuges, and by the results of "oceans of port wine." He died, overwhelmed with debts, in his London house on the 7th of July 1816, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

THE
CRITIC
OR
A Tragedy Rehearsed
A
Dramatic Piece
in three ACTS
as it is performed at the
THEATRE ROYAL in DRURY LANE
By
Richard Brinsley Sheridan Esq.
LONDON.
Printed for T. Becket, Adelphi. Strand.
MDCCLXXXI.

Title-page of First Edition of Sheridan's "Critic"

Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

FROM "THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

Sneer. That attack, now, on you the other day——

Sir Fretful Plagiary. What? Where?

Dangle. Ay! you mean in a paper of Thursday; it was completely ill-natured to be sure.

Sir F. Oh! so much the better; ha, ha, ha! I wouldn't have it otherwise. Well, and pray now—not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say?

Sneer. Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention or original genius whatever, though you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir F. Ha, ha, ha! very good!

Sneer. That as to comedy, you have not one idea of your own, he believes, even in your commonplace-book, where stray jokes and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the Lost and Stolen Office.

Sir F. Ha, ha, ha! very pleasant.

Sneer. Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to *steal* with taste; but that you glean from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sediments, like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir F. Ha, ha!

Sneer. In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable if the thoughts were ever suited to the expressions; but the homeliness of the sentiment stares through the fantastic incumbrance of its fine language, like a clown in one of the new uniforms.

Sir F. Ha, ha!

Sneer. That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your style, as tambour sprigs wou'd a ground of linsey-woolsey; while your imitations of Shakspeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's page, and are about as near the standard of the original.

Sir F. Ha!——

Sneer. In short, that even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating, so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilise.

Sir F. [*After great agitation.*] Now, another person would be vexed at this.

Sneer. Oh! but I wouldn't have told you, only to divert you.

Sir F. I know it. I *am* diverted—ha, ha, ha! not the least invention! ha, ha, ha!—very good, very good!

Sneer. Yes; no genius! ha, ha, ha!

Dangle. A severe rogue, ha, ha, ha!—but you are quite right, Sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir F. To be sure; for if there is anything to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it; and if it is abuse, why, one is always sure to hear of it from some damned good-natured friend or other!

Richard Cumberland (1732–1811), whose sensitiveness to criticism was ridiculed in the person of Sir Fretful Plagiary, was the versatile author of between fifty and sixty plays. He was born on the 19th of February 1732 under the roof of his maternal grandfather, the famous Dr. Bentley, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. His father was Dr. Denison Cumberland, Bishop of Kilmore; his mother Joanna Bentley, the "Phœbe" of Byron's celebrated pastoral. Perhaps the most successful of Cumberland's plays was *The West Indian*, 1771. He was connected for many years with the Board of Trade, of which he rose to be Secretary. He died at Tunbridge Wells, May 7, 1811, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. George Colman the Elder

(1733–1794), was the author of thirty-five pieces, almost entirely comic; of these *The Jealous Wife*, 1761, and *The Clandestine Marriage*, 1766, had great merit. His son, **George Colman the Younger** (1762–1836), was a highly successful writer of farces, squibs, and musical comedies, of which *Inkle and Yarico* was long the popular type.

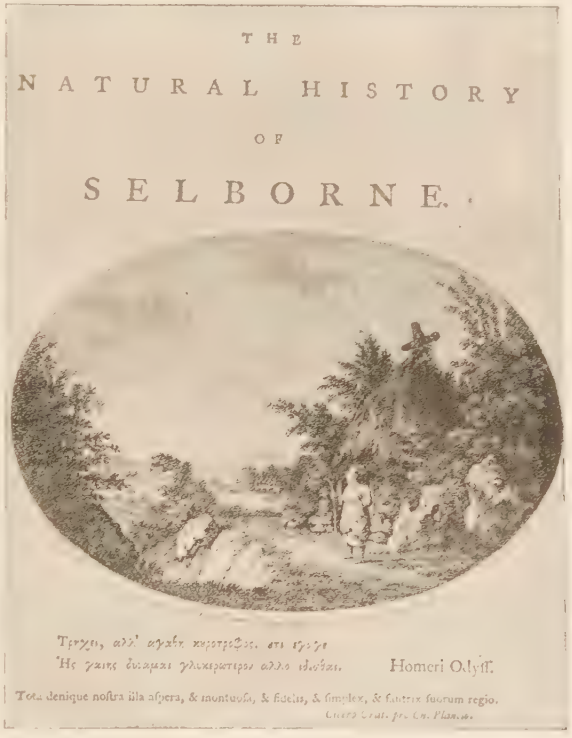
Richard Cumberland
After the Portrait by George Romney

We have spoken of the dawn of a revived romanticism in poetry. The signs of it were not less obvious in the prose of this period. Gray, with his fervent love of mountain scenery and recognition of the true sublime, is at the head of the naturalists. But great praise is due to the topographical writers who more and more drew attention to the forms of natural landscape. The observations of Gilpin, Uvedale Price, and Gilbert White, although made towards the close of the period we are examining, were not published until much later. Gilpin, in particular, is a pathetic instance of a man full of appreciation of natural beauty, prevented by the tradition of his time from expressing it; sensible of the charm of the visible world, yet tongue-tied and bound by sterile habits of repression. After the seal of a hundred years had been set on the eyes and mouths of men, it was not suddenly or without a struggle that they could welcome and respond to a revived consciousness of the loveliness of wild scenery.

George Colman the Elder
After the Portrait by Thomas Gainsborough

The extravagances of the formal landscape-gardeners awakened a protest from **Sir Uvedale Price** (1747–1829), who had inherited a large fortune in 1761, and set himself to lay out his estate at Foxley in Herefordshire. He put forth the views which had actuated him in the famous *Essay on the Picturesque*, which first appeared in 1794. He was in favour of letting nature have her way, and of

refraining from all "improvement" of scenery. He lived to see himself congratulated by Sir Walter Scott on having "converted the age" to his opinions. Uvedale Price was also a translator and commentator of Pausanias, and the very type of an elegant country gentleman of the old school. **William Gilpin** (1724–1804) was a Cumberland clergyman engaged in teaching. He was in the habit of taking extended summer tours, and of noting what he saw with pen and pencil. He wrote as an enthusiast, and was one of the pioneers of picturesque descriptive writing. His volumes on the *Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* (1789) undoubtedly prepared the way for the romantic school of poets. The publications of Gilpin were extremely numerous and varied in theme, but only those dedicated to picturesque travel could be said to survive him.


THE
NATURAL HISTORY
OF
SELBORNE.

Τέτλαθι, καὶ σφῶϊ κεκρυμμένα θυμῷ ἔχοντε
Ἧς γαίης δυσμὰς γλυκερώτερον ἄλλο ἰδώμεν. Homeri Odyss.

Tota denique nostra illa aspera, & montuosa, & facilis, & simplex, & subtrix fuorum regio.
Caesar Gral. pro Cn. Plancio.

Title-page of the First Edition of the "Natural History of Selborne"

Gilbert White (1720–1793), the scion of a respectable clerical family, was the son of John White and his wife Anne Holt, and was born on the 18th of July 1720, at Selborne in Hants, of which parish his grandfather, Gilbert White, was vicar. He was educated under the poet, Thomas Warton the elder, at Basingstoke, and in 1739 proceeded to Oriel College, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1743, and in 1744 was elected a Fellow. In 1747 White was admitted into holy orders by Bishop Secker. He became curate to his uncle Charles White at Swarraton, and in 1751 to his grandfather's successor at Selborne itself. Gilbert White did not, however, finally settle in the village which he has made so illustrious until 1755. A plurality of sinecure college-livings were offered to him; he accepted only one, the vicarage of Moreton-Pinkney in Northamptonshire, which he held from 1757 to his death. As soon as he had made his home at Selborne, he began to study its natural history, and to correspond with some of the most eminent scientists of the day, particularly with Banks, Daines Barrington, and Pennant; he greatly helped the last-mentioned in the composition of his once-famous *British Zoology*, although Pennant had not the grace to make any public acknowledgment of his debt. Barrington also used copious data supplied to him by Gilbert White, but always with adequate recognition. It was Barrington who, in 1770, first suggested to White that

he should "draw up an account of the animals of the neighbourhood" of Selborne. But progress was slow. In 1774 White is still collecting in journals the materials for an *annus historico-naturalis;* in 1780 he is arranging his notes; early in 1788 he is transcribing for the press. The celebrated work, so long preparing, was given at length to the public in 1789, as *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, and took its place at once as the most popular book of its class in English. White was now an elderly man, and the completion of his lifelong labour seems to have left him without any object for his energy. His kind, hospitable, and charitable career came to a noiseless end at Selborne on the 26th of June 1793. He would never sit for his portrait, but we are told that he was a little, spare man, of a remarkably upright carriage.

View of Selborne Church

FROM "THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE."

The evening proceedings and manœuvres of the rooks are curious and amusing in the autumn. Just before dusk they return in long strings from the foraging of the day, and

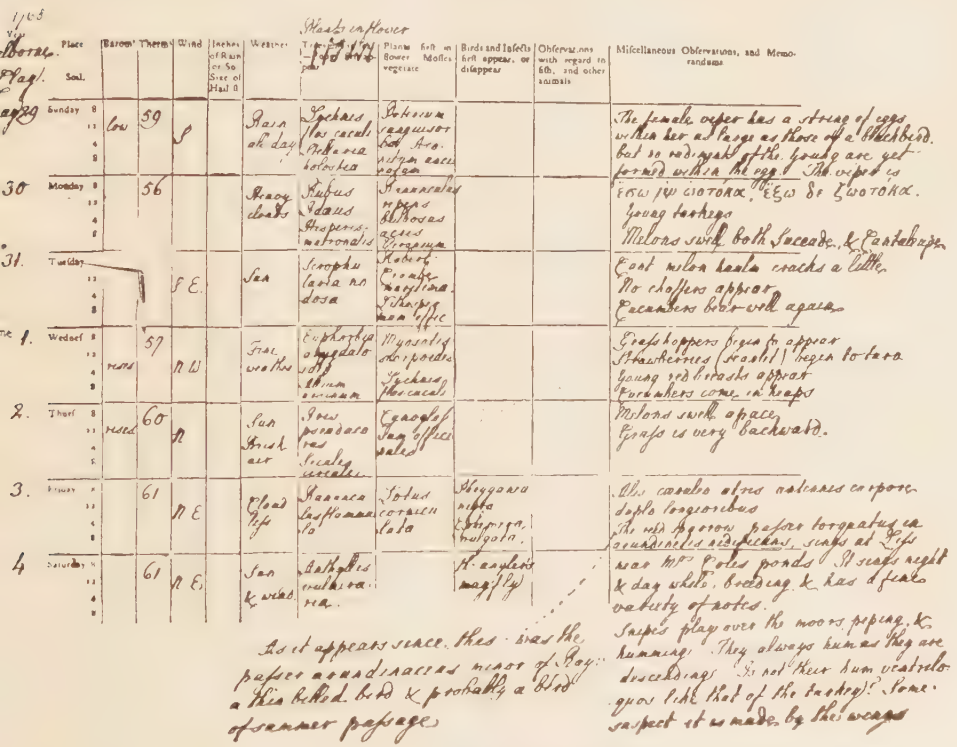
View of the Plestor, from the "Natural History of Selborne," 1789

rendezvous by thousands over Selborne down, where they wheel round in the air and sport and dive in a playful manner, all the while exerting their voices, and making a loud cawing, which, being blended and softened by the distance that we at the village are below them,

becomes a confused noise or chiding ; or rather a pleasing murmur, very engaging to the imagination, and not unlike the cry of a pack of hounds in hollow, echoing woods, or the rushing of the wind in tall trees, or the tumbling of the tide upon a pebbly shore. When this ceremony is over, with the last gleam of day, they retire for the night to the deep beechen woods of Tisted and Ropley. We remember a little girl who, as she was going to bed, used to remark on such an occurrence, in the true spirit of physico-theology, that the rooks were saying their prayers ; and yet this child was much too young to be aware that the Scriptures have said of the Deity—that "He feedeth the ravens who call upon Him."

White Owls.

We have had ever since I can remember, a pair of white owls that constantly breed under the eaves of this church. As I have paid good attention to the manner of life of



A Page from the "Naturalist's Journal," with Autograph Notes by Gilbert White

these birds during their season of breeding, which lasts the summer through, the following remarks may not perhaps be unacceptable : About an hour before sunset (for then the mice begin to run) they sally forth in quest of prey, and hunt all round the hedges of meadows and small enclosures for them, which seem to be their only food. In this irregular country we can stand on an eminence and see them beat the fields over like a setting-dog, and often drop in the grass or corn. I have minuted these birds with my watch for an hour together, and have found that they return to their nest, the one or other of them, about once in five minutes ; reflecting at the same time on the adroitness that every animal is possessed of as far as regards the well-being of itself and offspring. But a piece of address, which they show when they return loaded, should not, I think, be passed over in silence.—As they take their prey with their claws, so they carry it in their claws to their nest ; but, as the feet are necessary in their ascent under the tiles, they

constantly perch first on the roof of the chancel, and shift the mouse from their claws to their bill, that their feet may be at liberty to take hold of the plate on the wall as they are rising under the eaves.

White owls seem not (but in this I am not positive) to hoot at all; all that clamorous hooting appears to me to come from the wood kinds. The white owl does, indeed, snore and hiss in a tremendous manner; and these menaces well answer the intention of intimidating; for I have known a whole village up in arms on such an occasion, imagining the churchyard to be full of goblins and spectres. White owls also often scream horribly as they fly along; from this screaming probably arose the common people's imaginary species of screech-owl, which they superstitiously think attends the windows of dying persons. The plumage of the remiges of the wings of every species of owl that I have yet examined is remarkably soft and pliant. Perhaps it may be necessary that the wings of these birds should not make much resistance or rushing, that they may be enabled to steal through the air unheard upon a nimble and watchful quarry.

While I am talking of owls, it may not be improper to mention what I was told by a gentleman of the county of Wilts. As they were grubbing a vast hollow pollard-ash that had been the mansion of owls for centuries, he discovered at the bottom a mass of matter that at first he could not account for. After some examination he found that it was a congeries of the bones of mice (and perhaps of birds and bats) that had been heaping together for ages, being cast up in pellets out of the crops of many generations of inhabitants. For owls cast up the bones, fur, and feathers of what they devour, after the manner of hawks. He believes, he told me, that there were bushels of this kind of substance.

The art-criticism of the eighteenth century, which was in the main both pedantic and empirical, culminated in England in the *Discourses* of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS, in which a very great painter translated into the old professional formulas genuine impressions of beauty and a broad practical experience of æsthetics. Before his time persons who might or might not have ever seen a picture painted theorised about the principles of art in a vacuum; Reynolds was a superb painter first, and then a lecturer on the technique of the profession he practised. As a writer he has been accused of lacking animation and lucidity, and this is partly or occasionally true. But he has the ease of a man who knows what he is talking about, and a suavity and fulness characteristic of his charming social presence. His *Discourses*, which were listened to by all that was promising in the younger generation of painters and sculptors from Flaxman to Turner, exercised an immense influence on taste, and may still be read with instruction and pleasure.

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) was the son of a clergyman and schoolmaster at Plympton East, in South Devon, where he was born on the 16th of July 1723. He was educated at his father's grammar-school, with a view to his becoming a doctor, but his bias towards design was irresistible. In 1741 he was placed under Hudson, the portrait painter, with whom he worked for two years. In 1744 Reynolds started, first in London, then in Plymouth, painting cheap portraits for a livelihood. At the close of 1749 he sailed for Italy, where he remained until 1752, when he settled in London for the remainder of his life. Of the magnificent career of Reynolds as an artist this is not the place to speak. His intellectual life was greatly stimulated by his friendship with Johnson, which dated from about 1754; ten years later the lexicographer wrote to the painter, "If I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man whom I call

a friend;" this delightful companionship lasted unbroken till the death of Johnson. It was probably through Johnson that Reynolds gradually became intimate with Burke, Garrick, Goldsmith, and Percy. In their company he grew accustomed to intellectual exercises and to a witty turn of language such as no other artists of that day were proficient in or comprehended.

When, in December 1768, the Royal Academy was founded, Reynolds was elected the first president by a unanimous vote, not merely because of his supremacy as a painter, but because his elegant delivery and urbane ease of manners recommended him as a perfect representative of his order. He delivered his first lecture to the students on the 2nd of January 1769, and repeated them annually. Each was anonymously published in quarto form, immediately after its delivery, and in 1778 the first seven were reprinted in an octavo volume. Their successors were biennial, and were not reprinted until after the death of the great President. As we now possess them, the *Discourses* are fifteen in number. Reynolds died in his house in Leicester Fields, after a painfully depressing illness, on the 23rd of February 1792, and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Sir Joshua Reynolds

After a Portrait by himself

FROM "THE TENTH DISCOURSE" (December 11, 1780).

Sculpture is an art of much more simplicity and uniformity than painting; it cannot with propriety, and the best effect, be applied to many subjects. The object of its pursuit may be comprised in two words, Form and Character; and those qualities are presented to us but in one manner, or in one style only; whereas the powers of Painting, as they are more various and extensive, so they are exhibited in a great variety of manners. The Roman, Lombard, Florentine, Venetian, and Flemish Schools, all pursue the same end by different means. But Sculpture, having but one style, can only to one style of Painting have any relation; and to this, which is indeed the highest and most dignified that Painting can boast, it has a relation so close, that it may be said to be almost the same art operating upon different materials. The sculptors of the last age, from not attending sufficiently to this discrimination of the different styles of painting, have been led into many errors. Though they well knew that they were allowed to imitate, or take ideas for the improvement of their own art from the grand style of painting, they were not permitted to borrow in the same manner from the ornamental. When they endeavour to copy the

picturesque effects, contrasts, or petty excellencies of whatever kind, which not improperly find a place in the inferior branches of painting, they doubtless imagine themselves improving and extending the boundaries of their art by this imitation; but they are in reality violating its essential characters, by giving a different direction to its operations, and proposing to themselves either what is unattainable, or at best a meaner object of pursuit. The grave and austere character of sculpture requires the utmost degree of formality in composition; picturesque contrasts have here no p'ace; everything is carefully weighed and measured, one side making almost an exact equipoise to the other: a child is not a proper balance to a full-grown figure, nor is a figure sitting or stooping a companion to an upright figure.

The central portion of the eighteenth century marks a progress in the democratisation of literature. The love of books and the habit of reading spread rapidly and widely through all parts of the country and all ranks of society. The world of letters was no longer, as it had been in the age of Anne, a small circle of sub-aristocratic bourgeois who wrote for one another and for the polite toilets of London. The capital was no longer remarkable for the importance of its literary representatives; the life of letters was in the provinces, was almost cosmopolitan. English literature now, for the first time, became European, and in order to obtain that distinction, it was forced more and more to cast aside its original characteristics and to relinquish its insularity. That it did so with effect is proved by the very interesting fact that, while up to this date we have seen England either solitary or affected by Italy or France without the knowledge of those powers, we find it now suddenly producing the most powerfully radiating literature in Europe, and forming the taste of Germany, France, and the world. The final actor in the work of fusing the Saxon and the Latin literatures in one general style was Rousseau, who combined, as Mme. de Staël noted, the taste and habits of France with the ideas and sentiments of the North.

The freedom and rough simplicity of English life, its energy, its cultivation of truth and sincerity—qualities, no doubt, viewed by the Continental Anglomaniacs under too rosy a light, but still, in outline, recognisably national—these were what fascinated, in their different ways, Voltaire, Prévost, Diderot, and above all Rousseau. Conducted by these enthusiasts, the literature of barbarous England was received with open arms in all the academies and salons of Europe, and a new literature was everywhere stimulated into existence by the rivalry of such Englishmen as Young, Richardson, and Hume. On the other hand, it is impossible to overlook the influence of Montesquieu on such English minds as those of Gray, Gibbon, and Adam Ferguson; and the Scotch writers, in particular, consciously gallicised their style, in the pursuit of that elegant plausibility which they found so charming in French models. These reverberations of taste aided one another, and increased the facility with which English and Continental readers acquainted themselves mutually with the rival literature. But this marks a condition of things hitherto unparalleled, and we may roughly give the year 1750 as the date at which the wall which had from the earliest times

surrounded and concealed our intellectual products, began to crumble down and expose us to the half-admiring, half-scornful gaze of Europe.

This communion with exotic forms of intelligence, and the renewed sympathy for antique and romantic forms of thought and expression, tended, no doubt, to prepare our literature for the revolution which was coming. But even so late as 1780 there were few signs of change. Individual men of genius forced the language to say, for them and through them, things which had not been said before, but the pedagogic shackles were practically unloosened. It was in the insidious forms of "sensibility," as it was called, the new species of tender and self-satisfying pity, that the rigid rules of life were being most directly broken. This warm stream of sentiment, amounting at times to something like enthusiasm, tended to melt the horny or stony crust which the recognised conditions of thought had spread over every kind of literature. Grace, eloquence, intellectual curiosity, dignity — all these were still possible under the hard formular régime; but the more spiritual movements of the mind — lyrical passion, daring speculation, real sublimity, splendid caprice — were quite impossible within a space so cramped, and were, as a matter of fact, scarcely attempted.

When we consider, then, how unfavourable the conditions were in which literature was confined during the central years of the eighteenth century, we may marvel, not at the poverty, but at the richness of the actual product. If the creation of the novel was the greatest triumph of the age, it was not its only one. These years brought forth a number of men whose intellectual vitality was so commanding, that it negatived the sterile qualities of the soil from which they sprang. If Butler, Gibbon, Johnson, and Gray had been born in an age which aided instead of retarding the flow of their ideas, their periods might have been fuller, their ornament more splendid. But so intense was their individuality, so definite their sense of what their gift was to the age, that they overcame their disabilities, and produced work which we, regarding it with deep sympathy and respect, cannot conceive being cast in a form more pertinent or more characteristic. And it is a sentimental error to suppose that the winds of God blow only through the green tree; it is sometimes the dry tree which is peculiarly favourable to their passage.

END OF VOLUME III